

**Testimony on HJ 8 - Favorable  
Apology and Acknowledgement of the State's Responsibility in Racial Terror Lynchings**

**March 16, 2026**

Chair Healey, Vice Chair Holmes and members of the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee

The Montgomery County Lynching Memorial Project (MoCoLMP) offers **favorable testimony in support of HJ 8 - Apology and Acknowledgement of the State's Responsibility in Racial Terror Lynchings**. Of the 38 documented lynchings in Maryland, three occurred in Montgomery County: Mr. George Peck in Poolesville in 1880, Mr. John Diggs-Dorsey in Rockville in 1880 and Mr. Sidney Randolph in Rockville in 1896. Like every other lynching in Maryland, each of these three men was denied any semblance of due process and each racially violent death was determined to be "at the hands of parties unknown."

MoCoLMP is a grassroots organization and a designated Community Remembrance Project of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI). We have spent years documenting the lives and extrajudicial murders of these three men. Our work, in partnership with the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project, Montgomery History and EJI, revealed the painful truth that these were not just isolated acts of mob violence, but public spectacles often facilitated by the failure of state and local officials to provide equal protection and due process. And there is a direct line between these racial terror lynchings and the racial challenges we continue to face today. MoCoLMP seeks to educate and engage communities about our history and the legacy of slavery, racial violence, racial terror lynching and systemic racism by promoting truth, remembrance, reconciliation, and reckoning in Montgomery County.

Bryan Stevenson, founder of EJI, said "Reconciliation with a difficult past cannot be achieved without truthfully confronting history and finding a way forward that is thoughtful and responsible." That quote applies to this Joint Resolution. Sometimes apologies and acknowledgements can ring hollow or seem performative. But the actions called for in this Resolution are not "one and done." They are modest, common sense and essential steps enabling our county and Maryland to move toward a more equitable and just society.

House Joint Resolution 8:

- **Formally acknowledges and apologizes for the state's role** in facilitating these murders and its collusion in protecting perpetrators.
- **Helps restore public trust** between Black communities and government entities that resulted from decades of state-sanctioned terror.
- **Recognizes the impact of such violence**, including the destruction of Black communities' wealth and health, the separation of families, and the lasting trauma caused by these murders.
- **Commits the state to reparative actions** recommended in the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, ensuring that MoCoLMP's motto "remembering is resistance" fosters healing and translates into meaningful policy.

- **Helps educate future generations**, thereby helping to prevent the "erasure of these events from public memory" and supporting our mission to educate the community about the enduring legacy of systemic racism.

The MLTRC, established in 2019, is the nation's first government-backed, state-level commission dedicated specifically to investigating and documenting racial terror lynchings. While other states and cities have formed commissions to address systemic racism or specific violent events, Maryland was pioneering in its focus on these lynchings. Accordingly, passage of SJ 3 will signal to all Marylanders that the state is continuing to work to right the wrongs of the past and help ensure justice for all.

For these reasons, **the Montgomery County Lynching Memorial Project strongly urges the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee to issue a favorable report on HJ 8.**

Submitted by Paul Holmes (D-19, Silver Spring)  
For the Montgomery County Lynching Memorial Project