

Senate Judiciary Committee Mark-Up
Remarks on the Justice for Victims of Lynching Act of 2018

Thank you Mr. Chariman.

I want to take a brief moment to recognize the historic nature of today's mark-up.

Today we are poised, for the first time – in over 100 years of failed efforts – to finally make lynching a federal crime.

My friend, and a true American hero, Brian Stevenson, worked tirelessly through the Equal Justice Initiative to erect the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, the nation's first memorial dedicated to the legacy of enslaved black people, people terrorized by lynchings, African Americans humiliated by racial segregation and Jim Crow, and people of color burdened with contemporary presumptions of guilt and police violence.

The memorial is a painful and haunting reminder of our great Nation's horrific past, stained with the terror of racialized violence committed with near impunity.

This body's own past is stained with the stigma of indifference. As Elie Wiesel once said, QUOTE, "The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference."

I am proud to have worked in a bi-partisan fashion, with you, Mr. Chairman, as well as with my friend Senator Scott, to hopefully put an end to our long period of inaction, and to finally show that we as a Nation, will not tolerate bias-motivated violence in any form.

Mr. Chairman I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the Equal Justice Initiative Report entitled "Lynching in America, Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror."