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# Chattanooga News Chronicle

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Complimentary

## President Biden Signs Federal Anti-Lynching Bill Into Law

By Camm Ashford

On Tuesday, during a signing ceremony in the Rose Garden at the White House, President Joe Biden signed legislation to finally define lynching as a federal hate crime.

Congress first considered anti-lynching legislation more than 120 years ago. It failed to pass such legislation nearly 200 times, beginning with a bill introduced in 1900 by North Carolina Rep. George Henry White, the only black member of Congress at the time.

"Hundreds, hundreds of similar bills have failed to pass," President Biden said. "Over the years, several federal hate crime laws were enacted, including one I signed last year to combat COVID-19 hate crimes, but no federal law, no federal law expressly prohibited lynching. None. Until today."

The bill is named after the late 14-year-old Emmett Till, who in 1955 was abducted, beaten and brutally killed by two white men, who were subsequently acquitted by an all-white jury in Sumner, Mississippi. The two men, Roy Bryant and his half-brother J.W. Milam, would go on to admit to Till's murder the following year.

The outcome of the trial, coupled with Till's mother's insistence on holding an open-casket, public funeral to show her son's brutalized body, served as a catalyst and turning point for the civil rights movement, with activists and leaders often evoking his memory.

"I was 8 years old when my mother put the photograph of Emmett Till's brutalized body that ran in Jet magazine on our living room coffee table, pointed to it, and said, 'This is why I brought my boys out of Albany, Georgia,'" lead House sponsor of the bill Rep. Bobby L. Rush, D-Illinois, said in a statement.



March 29, 2022 President Biden signs into law the Emmett Till Anti-Lynching Bill to make Lynching a Federal Crime. President Biden's signature ended more than 100 years of failed efforts by the federal government to specifically outlaw lynching. Biden is joined and surrounded by, left, Vice President Kamala Harris and right, Author Michelle Duster, great-granddaughter of Ida B. Wells; and Till's cousin, Rev. Wheeler Parker. Others include members of the Congressional Black Caucus along with members of Congress. (White House FB photo)

"That photograph shaped my consciousness as a black man in America and changed the course of my life."

President Biden noted, "Racial hate isn't an old problem; it's a persistent problem. And I know many of the civil rights leaders here know, and you heard me say it a hundred times: Hate never goes away; it only hides. It hides under the rocks. And given just a little bit of oxygen, it comes roaring back out, screaming. But what stops it is all of us, not a few. All of us have to stop it."

The lead Senate sponsor of the bill Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J., said: "I feel a sense of joy. I can hear ancestors exhaling. It's been far too long justice has been delayed and denied."

Vice President Kamala Harris originally sponsored the legislation in June 2018, when she was representing California in the Senate, leading the effort with Sen. Booker and South Carolina Republican Sen. Tim Scott.

The legislation that is now becoming law would define hate crime con-

spiracies leading to serious injury or deaths as lynchings, subject to federal prison sentences of up to 30 years. The sentencing enhancement is stronger than what had appeared in prior bills.

Lynching was a common practice in the American South in the decades after the Civil War. From 1877 to 1950, more than 4,000 black people were lynched, according to a historical count by the Equal Justice Initiative.

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### Epsilon Xi Sigma Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. Hosted the Southeastern Region Conference in Spectacular Fashion



From left: Arthur Benton - Eastern TN State Director Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc.; Honorable Brother Chris Rey - 36th International President Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc.; Raquetta Dotley, Chattanooga City Council - Social Action Award; Gerald Harris, Tyner High School Principle - Education Award; Jerri Sutton, Chattanooga Police Captain - Social Action Award; John Edwards, III, founder Chattanooga News Chronicle - Bigger & Better Business Award; and Larvizo Wright, CPA, MBA, - Eastern TN 1st Vice State Director Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. (Photo: G.Faye Stoudemire)

Last weekend the Epsilon Xi Sigma Chattanooga Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. hosted the "Super" Southeastern Region Conference here in Chattanooga at the Chattanooga

Hotel. The Southeastern Region of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. consists of nearly 100 undergraduate and alumni chapters in East Tennessee, South Car-

olina, and North Carolina. The conference concluded with an Image Awards Gala Dinner where four Chattanoogaans were recognized for their accomplishments. LuDaryl Lyons is the president

of the Epsilon Xi Sigma Chattanooga Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.

### Extend Public Health Beyond April

Dear Secretary Becerra,

On behalf of the American Health Care Association and the National Center for Assisted Living's (AHCA/NCAL) more than 14,000 skilled nursing facilities (SNF), assisted living communities (AL), and intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ICF/IID) member providers, I want to thank you for the support you have shown the long term care community during the most difficult time in our sector's history. As our caregivers on the frontline continue to battle this virus, I urgently ask you to extend the public health emergency (PHE) beyond its current April 16, 2022 expiration. While statute only allows the PHE to be extended for 90 days, we encourage you to continue extending the PHE through the end of 2022 so that long term and post-acute care providers can continue to offer the most efficient and effective care possible to our nation's most vulnerable population.

This pandemic is far from over. A surge of cases of the BA.2 variant in Europe threaten a COVID resurgence in the United States, and your administration is currently advocating that Congress allocate tens of billions of dollars in additional COVID funding for testing, treatments, and other supplies our country needs to continue to battle

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the virus. In

### Gov. Lee Announces Proposal to Suspend Grocery Tax for 30 days

By Camm Ashford

NASHVILLE, Tenn.-Gov. Bill Lee on Tuesday announced a proposal for a 30-day suspension of state and local grocery sales tax to provide direct financial relief to Tennesseans amid surging inflation nationwide.

The governor's proposal was included in the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 budget amendment.

"As Americans see their cost-of-living skyrocket amid historic inflation, suspending the grocery tax is the most effective way to provide direct relief to every Tennessean,"

said Gov. Lee. "Our state has the ability to put dollars back in the pockets of hard-working Tennesseans, and I thank members of the General Assembly for their continued partnership in maintaining our fiscally conservative approach."

The tax suspension would cut approximately \$5 to \$10 off a \$100 grocery bill.

Rep. Yusuf Hakeem, a Democrat who serves District 28, supports the governor's proposal, but said a longer suspension would be more beneficial.

"I questioned if 30 days is enough time to really have the impact that we would like to see in regards to the ability of the average citizen in our state to be able to reap a benefit from it," Rep. Hakeem said. "In my view, lowering of the

gas tax at this time would have a greater impact when it comes to the family budget."

Nashville Senator Brenda Gilmore joined Rep. Hakeem in raising questions about whether a gas tax would be the best way to provide short term financial relief for Tennesseans.

"Was there any consideration to helping our constituents with the gas tax," asked Sen. Gilmore.

Dept. of Finance and Administration  
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Gov. Bill Lee's proposal for a 30-day suspension of state and local grocery sales tax is aimed at providing direct financial relief to Tennesseans amid surging inflation nationwide.

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