



NAACP - SAINT PAUL CHAPTER #4052

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March 27, 2023

Senator Melissa H. Wiklund
Health and Human Services Committee, Chair
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg, Room 2107
St Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support for Senate Bill SF18
Emmett Louis Till Victims Recovery Program

Dear Senator Wiklund:

My name is Pastor Richard Pittman Sr., and I am the President of the St. Paul NAACP. As you are aware, the NAACP is the largest and most recognized civil rights organization in the nation. Since our founding in 1909, we have been at the forefront of the fight for equality and social justice. The St Paul NAACP branch is one of the oldest in the country founded in 1913 by Frederick L. McGhee the first black attorney in the state of Minnesota.

I am writing this letter in support of the Emmett Louis Till Victims Recovery Program Senate Bill SF18. After decades of inaction, the NAACP commended the federal government for finally passing legislation that criminalize lynching as the shameful instrument of terror used to intimidate and oppress African Americans. In the 1930's the National Headquarters of the NAACP would hang a flag with the words "A man was lynched yesterday." In 1955, Emmett Till a 14 year old child was beaten, tortured and murdered by a gang of white supremist who dumped his body into the Tallahatchie River. The federal government is only now acknowledging the historical fact of widespread lynching whose memory continues to haunt Black communities.

We are proud to see that Minnesota is one of the first states to address the historical trauma faced by the victims, their families and heirs. Historical trauma based upon the violent death of a family member, assault, false accusations and wrongful convictions have a profound impact on the victim's mental, emotional and physical health. Untreated the trauma could lead to suicides, stroke, heart attacks or other serious consequences.

In conclusion, the St Paul NAACP strongly supports SF18 which support the health and wellness of victims of historical trauma. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact me at naacpstpaul4052@gmail.com. Thank you for your time and serious consideration.

Sincerely,

Pastor Richard Pittman, Sr.
President
St Paul NAACP

Cc: Senator Bobby Champion; Rep. Ruth Richardson