



THE NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTNERSHIP FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Top Black Church and NAACP Leaders Call on President Biden to Designate Springfield National Monument

Senior Leaders Join 5,300 Black Clergy and NAACP Members

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Washington, DC (August 16, 2023) – To mark the anniversary of the 1908 Springfield Race Riots, 7 top Black Church leaders from the largest Black church denominations joined 42 Black Church Bishops, 19 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Branch Presidents and more than 5,275 Black clergy and NAACP local leaders to urge President Biden to designate the 1908 Springfield Race Riot site as a National Monument.

The petition, sent to President Biden, urges the Biden Administration to designate the site of racially motivated mass violence on August 14-16, 1908, in Springfield, IL, that resulted in the destruction of Black homes and businesses and the death of Black Americans. The Springfield Race Riots resulted in the formation of the NAACP shortly thereafter. The petition states: “A Springfield Race Riot National Monument would be the only unit in the National Park System that highlights both the tragedy of mass violence against Black communities and the triumph of Black agency.”

The signers stated that a National Monument designation at Springfield would “counter to the organized efforts underway to erase Black history and the crucial contributions Black communities have made to this country. The national healing of racial trauma will come only when we collectively acknowledge the actual historical events that took place.”

The petition comes on the heels of a special resource study conducted by the National Park Service on the 1908 Springfield Race Riots, where more than 4,000 comments from Black clergy were submitted in support of preserving the site of the Springfield Race Riot as an important place of American history.

The National Religious Partnership for the Environment is an alliance of independent faith groups across a broad spectrum of religions including Catholic, Evangelical, Protestant, and Jewish.

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Petition can be found here:

http://www.nrpe.org/uploads/2/4/4/7/24473122/springfield_petition_final.pdf