

MAR 04 2021

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

ACKNOWLEDGING THE FORTHCOMING CENTENNIAL OF THE 1921 TULSA RACE
MASSACRE.

1 WHEREAS, in the late 1800s, an incredible number of
2 Americans with African descent (African Americans) began to move
3 away from Southern states to escape the region's systemic lack
4 of opportunity; and

5
6 WHEREAS, Tulsa County in Oklahoma, which reveled in
7 economic success under its title "the Oil Capital of the World,"
8 was an attractive destination for people seeking opportunities;
9 and

10
11 WHEREAS, in the early 1900s, due to the passage of Jim Crow
12 laws (or racial segregation laws) after the Reconstruction Act
13 of 1867, many Americans continued to believe and support the
14 ideas of white supremacy and thus, racial segregation and
15 oppression continued largely unabated after the Civil War; and

16
17 WHEREAS, violent crimes such as lynching, which went
18 unchecked by the justice system, were committed to enforce
19 racial segregation and instill terror in the African American
20 population; and

21
22 WHEREAS, pursuant to Jim Crow laws passed by the State of
23 Oklahoma and Tulsa County, the African Americans in Tulsa were
24 confined to the "Greenwood District", which they subsequently
25 developed into a nationally-renowned entrepreneurial center
26 known as the "Black Wall Street", with over ten thousand
27 residents by 1920; and

28
29 WHEREAS, on May 30, 1921, a nineteen year old African
30 American man was alleged to have assaulted a white teenaged girl
31 under dubious circumstances, but propelled by the sensational
32 reporting by a local newspaper, the brewing resentment amongst
33 white Americans against the rising wealth and success of African



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1 Americans, and a racially hostile climate in general, white
2 residents instigated calls for the man's lynching; and

3
4 WHEREAS, on May 31, 1921, hundreds of white men that
5 appeared to have the makings of a lynch mob congregated near the
6 Tulsa County Courthouse where the young African American man was
7 being held, demanding that he be turned over to them; and

8
9 WHEREAS, the arrival of a small group of armed African
10 American residents who came to the Courthouse to ensure the
11 young African American man's safety was interpreted by the white
12 residents as a "Negro uprising"; and

13
14 WHEREAS, from May 31 to June 1, 1921, thousands of
15 weapon-wielding white men invaded the Greenwood District and
16 decimated the African American community in what is now known as
17 the "Tulsa Race Massacre"; and

18
19 WHEREAS, the local officials not only failed to take
20 actions to calm or contain the violence but aggravated it by
21 providing firearms and ammunition to and deputizing hundreds of
22 white men from the crowd that gathered as a potential lynch mob,
23 whom in that capacity engaged in overt and often illegal acts
24 that destroyed the Greenwood community; and

25
26 WHEREAS, the white mob indiscriminately killed numerous
27 African American residents, and looted, damaged, deliberately
28 burned, or otherwise destroyed an estimated 1,256 homes, as well
29 as virtually every other structure in the Greenwood District
30 including churches, schools, businesses, the library, and the
31 only hospital; and

32
33 WHEREAS, under martial law declared by the Governor of
34 Oklahoma, the Oklahoma National Guard arrested the remaining
35 6,000 residents of Greenwood, detained them in internment camps,
36 forced them to into labor, and refused to release them until a
37 white person applied for their release and vouched for their
38 subsequent behavior; and

39
40 WHEREAS, in a period of less than twenty-four hours, the
41 white mob's violence led to the destruction of thirty-five
42 square blocks of the Greenwood District, deaths of an estimated



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1 three hundred people, injuries of over eight hundred people,
2 property damage of over \$2,000,000, and nearly ten thousand
3 homeless African Americans; and

4
5 WHEREAS, local officials actively impeded the African
6 American Tulsans' effort to rebuild their community by refusing
7 support for reconstruction from other cities and imposing a
8 restrictive fire code that made rebuilding too expensive for
9 most residents; and

10
11 WHEREAS, none of the state and local officials nor white
12 residents who participated in the massacre were held accountable
13 for their acts of violence or contributions thereto, as the
14 officials advanced a narrative that attributed the massacre to
15 Greenwood residents, which induced the all-white grand jury to
16 conclude that the African Americans caused the violence and the
17 attorney for the state gave immunity to all white persons who
18 looted the homes of or murdered African Americans; and

19
20 WHEREAS, for decades, the terror, violence, and losses of
21 the massacre was largely omitted from local, state, and national
22 histories until the Oklahoma State Legislature created a
23 commission in 1997, to study the event; and

24
25 WHEREAS, on February 28, 2001, the commission issued a
26 report that set forth a historical record of the massacre and
27 recommended that reparations be made to the identified survivors
28 and their descendants; and

29
30 WHEREAS, despite the commission's recommendation,
31 reparations to the survivors of the massacre and their
32 descendants have not been made;

33
34 WHEREAS, the issues of systemic racism, police brutality,
35 and racially motivated violence and human rights violations
36 against Black people continue to exist in the United States; and

37
38 WHEREAS, the year 2021 marks the 100th anniversary of the
39 Tulsa Race Massacre; and



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1 WHEREAS, in July 2020, resolutions to recognize the
2 centennial of the Tulsa Race Massacre were introduced in both
3 chambers of the United State Congress; now, therefore,
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5 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first
6 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021, the
7 House of Representatives concurring, that the Legislature
8 acknowledges the forthcoming centennial of the Tulsa Race
9 Massacre; and
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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body acknowledges the
12 historical significance of this event not only to honor the
13 lives and legacies of the African Americans killed during the
14 massacre and those who were left to suffer from the loss of
15 their homes and livelihoods, but also to condemn the continued
16 legacy of racism; and
17

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this
19 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor.
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22

OFFERED BY:

