

105TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 466

Condemning the brutal killing of Mr. James Byrd, Jr.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 11, 1998

Ms. WATERS (for herself, Mrs. NORTHUP, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CLAY, Mr. STOKES, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. DIXON, Mr. OWENS, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. NORTON, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mrs. CLAYTON, Mr. BISHOP, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. HILLIARD, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. MCKINNEY, Mrs. MEEK of Florida, Mr. RUSH, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. WATT of North Carolina, Mr. WYNN, Mr. THOMPSON, Mr. FATTAH, Ms. JACKSON-LEE, Mr. JACKSON, Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD, Mr. CUMMINGS, Ms. CARSON, Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. FORD, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Ms. LEE, Mr. GEPHARDT, Mr. BONIOR, Mr. TURNER, Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. FROST, Mr. STENHOLM, Mr. HALL of Texas, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. EDWARDS, Mr. GREEN, Mr. BENTSEN, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. REYES, Mr. SANDLIN, Mr. GINGRICH, Mr. ARMEY, Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. HASTERT, Mr. BOEHNER, Ms. DUNN of Washington, Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, Mr. LINDER, Mr. FAZIO of California, Mrs. KENNELLY of Connecticut, Mr. TRAFICANT, Mr. McNULTY, Mr. WAMP, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mrs. CHENOWETH, Mr. SISISKY, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. FURSE, Mr. MILLER of California, Mr. OLVER, Ms. HARMAN, Mrs. BONO, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. BACHUS, and Mr. POSHARD) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

JUNE 11, 1998

Committee on the Judiciary discharged; considered and adopted

RESOLUTION

Condemning the brutal killing of Mr. James Byrd, Jr.

1 *Resolved,*

2 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

3 The House of Representatives finds as follows:

4 (1) Mr. James Byrd, Jr., a 49-year-old disabled
5 African American male from Jasper County, East
6 Texas, was last seen walking home from a niece's
7 bridal shower on June 6, 1998, and allegedly was of-
8 fered a ride by 3 young white men, who then pro-
9 ceeded to physically and mercilessly beat Mr. Byrd
10 in Jasper, Texas, then chained him to the back of
11 a pickup truck and dragged him until the torso of
12 his body was torn to pieces.

13 (2) Mr. James Byrd, Jr.'s body was found Sun-
14 day, June 7, 1998, on a bumpy, winding country
15 road about 10 miles from his Jasper home, at the
16 end of a trail of blood along a 2-mile stretch of road
17 with his head, neck, and right arm severed.

18 (3) Mr. Byrd was so brutally disfigured that his
19 head and torso were completely severed, with his
20 head, neck, and right arm found about a mile away,
21 and only finger prints could be used to identify him.

22 (4) Mr. Lawrence Russell Brewer, 31, of Sul-
23 phur Springs, Texas and Mr. Shawn Allen Berry,
24 23, and Mr. John William King, 23, of Jasper,
25 Texas, all of whom have past criminal records and

1 have served time in prison or were on probation,
2 have been charged with murder and are being held
3 without bail.

4 (5) The police released an affidavit of probable
5 cause in which Mr. Berry said they had been out
6 drinking and picked up Mr. Byrd as he walked down
7 Martin Luther King Drive in Jasper early Sunday.

8 (6) Mr. Berry said that he stopped at a conven-
9 ience store, but Mr. King was angry that he was giv-
10 ing a ride to a black man, so he took over at the
11 steering wheel and drove to a remote area 7 miles
12 outside of town, where they killed Mr. Byrd.

13 (7) The 3 men were known to be members of
14 various hate groups, including the Ku Klux Klan
15 and the Aryan Brotherhood.

16 (8) This was not a random act of violence, but
17 a senseless, hate-filled crime.

18 (9) The Federal Bureau of Investigation also is
19 investigating to see if the 3 could be charged with
20 violating Mr. Byrd's Federal civil rights.

21 (10) One of the suspects allegedly said that
22 they wanted to "start the Turner Diaries early," re-
23 ferring to a novel about race war that is popular
24 reading among some hate groups and white su-
25 premacists.

1 (11) This incident is reminiscent of the brutal
2 slayings that occurred at the turn of the century and
3 in the 1920s and 1930s, with brutal hangings which
4 brought the National Association for the Advance-
5 ment of Colored People into existence and contrib-
6 uted to its growth in its early days.

7 (12) This and similar incidents threaten the
8 peaceful coexistence, security, and foundation of all
9 communities.

10 **SEC. 2. CONDEMNING THE KILLING OF JAMES BYRD, JR.**

11 The House of Representatives—

12 (1) condemns the actions which occurred in
13 Jasper, Texas as unacceptable and outrageous, to be
14 condemned by all people of all races, creeds, and re-
15 ligions;

16 (2) pledges to do everything in its power, in-
17 cluding holding public hearings, to probe the under-
18 lying causes of this brutal killing and to make sure
19 that the United States does not return to the days
20 when such hatred, brutality, violence, hangings, and
21 murder were deemed acceptable;

22 (3) calls on the Federal Bureau of Investiga-
23 tion, the Department of Justice, the White House,
24 and all other Federal law enforcement agencies to
25 conduct an immediate, full, and fair investigation

1 into all of the facts of the case to aggressively re-
2 spond to this tragedy with indictments, and urges
3 the prosecution proceed aggressively with a fair but
4 speedy trial;

5 (4) calls upon each Member of Congress and
6 every citizen of the United States, in his or her own
7 way, through his or her church, synagogue, mosque,
8 workplace, or social organization, to join in denounce-
9 ing and getting others to denounce this outrageous
10 murder of another human being; and

11 (5) pledges to join in efforts to bring an end to
12 racism and an end to the fear and hatred which un-
13 derlie it, and to encourage all Americans to dedicate
14 themselves to ending racism and violence in the
15 United States.

○