

H. Res. 466

In the House of Representatives, U.S.,

June 11, 1998.

Resolved,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

The House of Representatives finds as follows:

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

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

(3) Mr. Byrd was so brutally disfigured that his head and torso were completely severed, with his head,

neck, and right arm found about a mile away, and only finger prints could be used to identify him.

(4) Mr. Lawrence Russell Brewer, 31, of Sulphur Springs, Texas and Mr. Shawn Allen Berry, 23, and Mr. John William King, 23, of Jasper, Texas, all of whom have past criminal records and have served time in prison or were on probation, have been charged with murder and are being held without bail.

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

(6) Mr. Berry said that he stopped at a convenience store, but Mr. King was angry that he was giving a ride to a black man, so he took over at the steering wheel and drove to a remote area 7 miles outside of town, where they killed Mr. Byrd.

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

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

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

(10) One of the suspects allegedly said that they wanted to “start the Turner Diaries early,” referring to a novel about race war that is popular reading among some hate groups and white supremacists.

(11) This incident is reminiscent of the brutal slayings that occurred at the turn of the century and in the 1920s and 1930s, with brutal hangings which brought the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People into existence and contributed to its growth in its early days.

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

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

The House of Representatives—

(1) condemns the actions which occurred in Jasper, Texas as unacceptable and outrageous, to be condemned by all people of all races, creeds, and religions;

(2) pledges to do everything in its power, including holding public hearings, to probe the underlying causes of this brutal killing and to make sure that the United States does not return to the days when such hatred, brutality, violence, hangings, and murder were deemed acceptable;

(3) calls on the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Justice, the White House, and all other Federal law enforcement agencies to conduct an immediate, full, and fair investigation into all of the facts of the case to aggressively respond to this tragedy with indictments, and urges the prosecution proceed aggressively with a fair but speedy trial;

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

(5) pledges to join in efforts to bring an end to racism and an end to the fear and hatred which underlie it, and to encourage all Americans to dedicate themselves to ending racism and violence in the United States.

Attest:

Clerk.