

# **Reginald F. Lewis Museum receives federal funding to build permanent exhibit and memorial on the history of lynching in Maryland**

By **Laura Stewart** - April 8, 2022

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*Senator Chris Van Hollen announces \$650,000 in federal funding for the creation of a permanent exhibit and memorial at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum. Photo via the Reginald F. Lewis Museum/Facebook Live.*

Senator Chris Van Hollen on Friday visited Baltimore’s Reginald F. Lewis Museum to announce \$650,000 in federal funding for the creation of a permanent exhibition on the history of lynching in Maryland and memorial to honor the memories of those whose lives were taken.

“It’s important that we have a permanent exhibit, that we always remember exactly what happened here in Maryland and around the country,” Van Hollen said at the press conference.

“This is a part of Maryland’s history and we can’t hide from it, we can’t shy away from it,” Van Hollen said, “We need to confront it in order to make sure that we address all of the issues that are still with us today.”

The announcement comes on the heels of two historic events, Van Hollen noted: the Senate’s confirmation of Ketanji Brown Jackson, the first Black woman to sit on the Supreme Court, and the passage of the Emmett Till Antilynching Act, which was signed into law by President Biden last week.

The antilynching measure – named for Emmett Till, a 14-year-old boy who was abducted, tortured, and killed in 1955 after being accused of whistling at a white woman – designates lynching a hate crime punishable by up to 30 years in prison.

Terri Lee Freeman, executive director of the Reginald F. Lewis Museum, said that the museum’s exhibition will acknowledge that “lynching continues today,” she said at the press conference.

“We can think of vigilante violence upon Ahmaud Arbery and Trayvon Martin, and others in recent years, and it’s not much different than what we saw in the late 1800s, early 1900s,” Freeman said.



The funding will build on the work of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the

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Dr. David Fakunle, chair of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, highlighted the importance of addressing racial violence.

“It’s not just about memorialization, it’s not just about preserving history,” Fakunle said.

“It’s about making sure we put in the work to make sure the damage that has been happening to Black, brown, and Indigenous communities across the state and around the world is addressed,” he said, “Truly addressed, not just acknowledged, not just stated, but addressed, removed, eliminated.”

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