

WHITE HOUSE

# Biden signs bill named after Emmett Till making lynching a hate crime

Congress passed the measure with overwhelming bipartisan support.



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By Teaganne Finn

WASHINGTON – President Joe Biden signed the [Emmett Till](#) Antilynching Act on Tuesday, making lynching a [federal hate crime](#) after more than a century of failed efforts in Congress to pass similar legislation.

The bill is named after Till, a 14-year-old Black teenager from Chicago who was abducted, tortured and shot in the head in 1955 after a white woman, Carolyn Bryant Donham, said he

whistled at her and touched her in a Mississippi store.

The Senate cleared the bill on March 7 by unanimous consent, indicating no opposition, after the House passed it on Feb. 28 in a 422-3 vote. The three votes against the measure came from GOP Reps. Thomas Massie of Kentucky, Chip Roy of Texas and Andrew S. Clyde of Georgia.

Congress had fallen short on passing anti-lynching bills more than 200 times since 1900.



— "Racial hate isn't an old problem – it's a persistent problem," Biden said in signing the antilynching act.

Patrick Semansky / AP

Biden said during the bill signing ceremony that the antilynching law was not just about the civil rights struggle from decades ago, citing the 2020 shooting of Ahmaud Arbery and the white supremacist rally that took place in Charlottesville, Va., in 2017.

"From the bullets in the back of Ahmaud Arbery to countless other acts of violence, countless victims known and unknown, the same racial hatred that drove the mob to hang a noose brought that mob carrying torches out of the fields of Charlottesville just a few years ago," said Biden.

"Racial hate isn't an old problem – it's a persistent problem," he added.

**How the lynching of a 14-year-old boy sparked a movement**

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