



STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

LARRY HOGAN
GOVERNOR

May 8, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

I am writing to encourage your Administration to establish a U.S. Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation Commission.

Today at an event in honor of Howard Cooper, a 15-year old boy who was dragged from the Baltimore County Jail and hanged from a sycamore tree, I issued a posthumous pardon for Mr. Cooper, and 33 other victims of racial lynching in the State of Maryland between 1854 and 1933. This is the first time in history that any governor has issued a blanket pardon for the victims of racial lynchings. This would not have been possible without all those who have worked hard over the years to bring to light this painful legacy of racial terror crimes, and I hope that this will in some way right these horrific wrongs and bring a measure of peace to the memories of these Marylanders and their loved ones.

Additionally, during the 2019 Maryland Legislative Session, the Maryland General Assembly enacted and I signed into law legislation establishing the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission as the first commission dedicated to investigating lynchings in the United States. The commission is tasked with researching documented lynchings that took place in the State of Maryland between 1854 and 1933, holding public hearings in communities where these acts of racial terror took place, and developing recommendations rooted in restorative justice. Recently, the commission was awarded a \$300,000 grant through the U.S. Department of Justice to research and address the legacy of unsolved lynchings that occurred in the State of Maryland.

A national commission would further this important work by examining racial healing through a larger lens.

As the previous Chair of the National Governors Association and recently appointed Co-Chair of the bipartisan political organization *No Labels*, I have publicly committed to the importance of collaborating across party lines. Divisive politics have fractured our nation for far too long. Promoting equity, inclusion, and equal justice for all Americans is not a partisan endeavor.

I look forward to working closely with the Biden-Harris administration to initiate this bipartisan effort, and I thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Larry Hogan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Larry" and the last name "Hogan" clearly distinguishable.

Larry Hogan
Governor