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September 25, 2024

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

Re: Investigation of the Tulsa Race Massacre and Justice for the Survivors and Descendants

Dear President Biden:

I trust this communique finds you well as you continue to address the pressing issues of our time. I write to you seeking justice for the remaining survivors of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. According to information provided to my office, by the grace of God, two victims of the Massacre, 110-year-old Viola Ford Fletcher and 109-year-old Lessie Benningfield Randle, remain with us and continue to fight for justice. The Survivors experienced one of the most horrific acts of violence perpetrated against Black people in American history; yet, over a century later, they have received no compensation for the material and mental damages incurred or the opportunities they lost. They, after more than a century, have not received the justice we pledge allegiance to.

The laconic ensuing facts provided to my office explicate the haunting rationale for heeding the Tulsa victims clarion appeal for justice.

The Tulsa Race Massacre occurred in the Greenwood district of Tulsa, Oklahoma on May 31 and June 1, 1921. Following specious allegations that a Black teenager sexually assaulted a White woman in an elevator, a violent mob of armed White Tulsans encircled Greenwood and terrorized the district's Black residents for nearly 48 hours. The mob, operating under the authority of the City of Tulsa, the Oklahoma Military Department, and Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, murdered and assaulted Black citizens and looted and destroyed Black-owned property. The Massacre left hundreds dead, over 1,500 homes and businesses destroyed, and nearly 10,000 Black Tulsans homeless. The Greenwood business district, colloquially known as Black Wall Street, and once considered the wealthiest Black community in the nation, was violently decimated.

According to information provided to my office, Mrs. Fletcher and Mrs. Randle filed suit in Oklahoma state court in 2020 under Oklahoma's public nuisance statute arguing that the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma Military Department, and the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce perpetrated a public nuisance within the Greenwood community that remains unabated. Importantly, there is no time bar for this action. However, in August of this year, the Oklahoma Supreme Court affirmed the trial court's dismissal of the case. It appears that Mrs. Fletcher and Mrs. Randle will likely pass on

without receiving justice. Indeed, Mr. Hughes Van Ellis, Mrs. Fletcher's brother and a plaintiff in the 2020 lawsuit, passed away just last year at age 102.

Damario Solomon-Simmons, the attorney representing Mrs. Fletcher and Mrs. Randle, has informed my office of his request for the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate the Tulsa Race Massacre under the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act of 2007. The Emmett Till Act instructs the DOJ to investigate and prosecute violations of criminal civil rights statutes that occurred before January 1, 1970, and resulted in death. An investigation into the Tulsa Race Massacre would include identifying the individuals and entities that engaged in this racially motivated Massacre. Moreover, under the Emmett Till Act, the Department of Justice is well-suited to investigate the recently discovered mass graves that have housed the remains of Massacre victims for over a century.

Mr. President, I know that you have long been a champion of civil rights for Black Americans. The Survivors and the Tulsa community were grateful that you used your bully pulpit during the 2021 centennial commemoration to advocate for justice for the Massacre. Therefore, I ask that you use your powerful voice to ensure that the Massacre is not forgotten and that justice prevails.

Mr. President, I humbly request that you do whatever is in your power to ensure that the Survivors of the Massacre may receive justice. The history of racist lynchings that occurred in America demand accountability. By investigating the brutalities of the Tulsa Race Massacre, we can continue to work toward repairing past harms and achieving a more just America for us all.

Sincerely,



Al Green
Member of Congress

*Progenitor of Aug. 20th as
Slavery Remembrance Day*

*Scion of the Enslaved Africans –
Sacrificed to Make America Great*