



Durbin, Duckworth Push For Site Of Emmett Till's Memorial Service To Be Designated As Part Of National Park System

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) today requested the National Park Service (NPS) to conduct a reconnaissance survey of the Roberts Temple Church of God In Christ, located at 4021 South State Street, in the Bronzeville area of Chicago, Illinois, for consideration as a new unit of the National Park System. Roberts Temple is the site of the memorial service for fourteen-year-old Emmett Till, who was abducted, tortured, and lynched in Mississippi in 1955. In a letter to NPS, Durbin and Duckworth wrote that the Chicago City Council has designated Roberts Temple as a Chicago Landmark, affording the site some limited protection, but the condition of the building, juxtaposed with its prominence in American Civil Rights history, warrants federal protection and interpretation.

“Emmett’s mother, Mamie Till-Mobley, made the courageous decision to insist on an open-casket wake for the mutilated body of her son, in order to ‘let the world see what I’ve seen,’ Durbin and Duckworth wrote. “Roberts Temple is an ideal candidate for inclusion in the National Park System: a nationally significant cultural resource that represents a crucial part of American history, and a site that can serve as a beacon for public awareness and education about the way the Civil Rights Movement reshaped the fabric of our nation.”

In addition to hosting Emmett Till’s memorial service, Roberts Temple served as a central place of worship and political organizing for many African Americans during the Great Migration of the early 20th Century. Today, the building remains in use by the Church of God In Christ denomination, and the Pastor is Elder Cleven Wardlow

Last month, Duckworth and Durbin introduced the Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley, and Roberts Temple National Historic Site Act, which would establish the church as a historic site to be managed by NPS to ensure it will continue to stand and that an important part of Emmett Till's story is preserved. Senators Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Roger Wicker (R-MS) are cosponsors of this bipartisan legislation. Text of this bill can be found [here](#).

The full text of the letter is available [here](#)