

# **Duckworth, Durbin Applaud President Biden's Announcement To Name Bronzeville Church That Held Emmett Till's Wake A National Monument**

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Chair of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, today applauded the Biden Administration's announcement that it will designate the church that held Emmett Till's pivotal open-casket wake in Chicago's Bronzeville

neighborhood as a national monument. In a White House ceremony tomorrow, President Biden will designate Bronzeville's Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ as a national monument to be managed by the U.S. National Park Service to ensure that the historic church will be preserved and continue to tell Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley's critically important story as part of American history.

"Roberts Temple Church of God In Christ is of both extraordinary and incredibly heartbreaking historical importance to Chicago, our state and to this country—which is why I've been working for years to make this site a national monument," Duckworth said. "At a time when some on the far right are trying to whitewash our nation's history and erase the devastating legacies of slavery and lynchings on Black Americans, I'm proud that President Biden is taking action to help ensure that generations of Americans have more opportunity to reflect on Mamie and Emmett's stories. It's past time we recognize how national monuments can not only teach us about our history—but provoke us to build a more just future."

"The story of Emmett Till is emblematic of one of the darkest chapters in our nation's history when lynchings were a frequent occurrence. As her son's body was returned to Chicago, Mamie Till-Mobley courageously chose to hold an open-casket wake at Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ so others could witness the cruel reality of racism in the United States," said Durbin. "After continuously advocating for lynching to be designated as a hate crime and for the preservation of Roberts Temple, I am grateful that President Biden has moved to establish a national monument at the church to help ensure that Emmett Till's story is not forgotten."

Duckworth's leadership has been critical in the Roberts Temple Church of God In Christ site designation. Duckworth originally introduced the *Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley, and Roberts Temple National Historic Site Act* in [2021](#) and reintroduced the legislation [earlier this year](#). Duckworth was joined by U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL), Corey Booker (D-NJ), Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS) and Roger Wicker (R-MS) in reintroducing the bipartisan legislation.

Last Congress, Durbin pushed for passage of the long-overdue *Emmett Till Antilynching Act*. In March 2022, the legislation unanimously [passed](#) the Senate and was signed into law, explicitly making lynching a federal hate crime.

As Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Durbin has held several [hearings](#) on combating hate crimes and the rise in horrific incidents of domestic terrorism targeting communities of color and religious and ethnic minorities. Durbin has questioned federal leaders, including FBI Director [Christopher Wray](#) and Assistant Attorney General [Kristen Clarke](#), about what more can be done to address violence, hate, and discrimination targeting affected communities.

Duckworth has made elevating disenfranchised communities and their stories one of her main priorities while in Congress. While working with the U.S. Department of interior closely to designate Roberts Temple as a national monument, she is also working to preserve and uplift other stories critical to our country's history, [including](#) the 1908 Springfield Race Riot National Historic Site.

A Chicagoan, Emmett's funeral was held at the Roberts Temple Church after the 14 year old was brutalized and lynched in Mississippi in 1955. His mother, Mamie Till-Mobley, made the decision to have her son's funeral as a public, open-casket wake. The wake was attended by thousands and sparked international discourse over his killing and racist violence in America and is cited as one of the catalysts for the Civil Rights Movement. In 2020, the site was one of the most endangered historic sites in the U.S., according to the National Trust for Historic Preservation.