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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2402

February 10, 2017

The Honorable Thomas Wheeler
Acting Assistant Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Assistant Attorney General Wheeler:


I write to request that your office investigate the recent statements made by Carolyn Bryant Donham. As Representative of the Second Congressional District of Mississippi, I serve Tallahatchie County which includes the area where the abduction and murder of Emmett Louise Till took place on August 28, 1955.

On the day of his murder, Emmett Till went inside of Bryant's Grocery & Meat Market in Money, Mississippi with a local relative. He was left alone in the store with Carolyn Bryant Donham. She alleged that Till grabbed her and verbally threatened her before leaving the store. That evening Till was abducted, tortured, and killed by Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam as retribution for the alleged interaction in the store.

According to numerous media reports, Carolyn Bryant Donham recently admitted to the author of an upcoming book that she fabricated the story of her interaction with Till while under oath during the trial of Till's murderers. Her confession has raised questions by many of my constituents as to whether Donham violated the law and if the opportunity exists for legal action to be taken against her.

On different occasions, I have had the opportunity to meet with Emmett Till's family. Their distress and passion for justice has always been evident. I consider this case to be important and needs further investigation. The state of Mississippi, civil rights advocates, and his family are relying on the United States federal justice system to take this matter serious and conduct a formal investigation. The facts known to us today affords DOJ an opportunity to bring some justice to an innocent 14 year old boy whose death was an end result of false testimony. Carolyn Bryant Donham's false statement holds liability for the death of Emmett Louise Till. I urge you to investigate the recent statements. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me or Shalonda Spencer in my Washington, DC office.

Sincerely,


Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

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