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ISSUE UPDATE

DATE: August 3, 2008
TO: Concerned Parties
FROM: Hilary O. Shelton, Director, Washington Bureau



US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PASSES LEGISLATION APOLOGIZING FOR SLAVERY AND JIM CROW “SEPARATE BUT EQUAL” ERAS *RESOLUTION ALSO CITES CONTINUING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF TRANSATLANTIC SLAVERY TRADE ON AFRICAN AMERICANS TODAY*

THE ISSUE:

On Tuesday, July 29 2008 the United States House of Representatives passed, by a unanimous vote, H. Res. 194, a resolution apologizing for the enslavement and racial segregation of African Americans. This resolution was significant for several reasons, including the fact that it addressed not only slavery but the “separate but equal” Jim Crow era as well.

This legislation is an important first step in recognizing a very important aspect of American’s history and recommitting ourselves to bringing about an end to the disparities and injustices that continue to plague our Nation as a result of the dehumanization of an entire race. In passing this resolution, the House of Representatives has sent a message to all of the American people and others that the most powerful nation in the world is willing to look honestly at some of the most shameful parts of its history, accept responsibility, and apologize for its actions.

The NAACP Washington Bureau has been in negotiations with Senator Tom Harkin (Iowa) to author a companion resolution in the Senate; we are hoping it will be introduced in the near future. The NAACP also strongly supports H.R. 40, legislation introduced by Congressman John Conyers (MI) to take the next step toward healing our Nation by addressing and seeking remedy for the lingering effects of this deplorable institution.

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