



September 6, 2022

Mr. Tokey Boswell  
Associate Regional Director  
Facilities, Planning, and Infrastructure  
National Park Service  
601 Riverfront Drive  
Omaha, NE 68102

SENT VIA EMAIL TO: [Tokey\\_Boswell@nps.gov](mailto:Tokey_Boswell@nps.gov)

Dear Mr. Boswell:

Thank you for the work of the National Park Service (NPS) to study the site of the 1908 Race Riot in Springfield, Illinois. **The League of Conservation Voters (LCV) and Illinois Environmental Council (IEC) strongly support the designation of the Springfield 1908 Race Riot as a new national monument.** We respectfully request President Biden to protect the Springfield site to acknowledge our nation's terrible legacy of racial violence and to tell the story of Black leadership to overcome that legacy.

LCV and IEC drive environmental progress through empowerment and action. We believe that threats to clean air, clean water, and health, and the need for safe communities, are not niche issues that happen in a vacuum—our social structures impact how these problems manifest and who bears the greatest burdens. Unfortunately, because of racism, inequality, and injustice, our low-income and communities of color disproportionately shoulder these burdens. To start to undo these injustices and better understand these burdens, we must learn from history. However, less than a quarter of our national parks are dedicated to recognizing the histories and stories of black, indigenous, and people of color, and fewer explore the structures of racism that continue to hold our country back. None tell the story of our nation's long history of race riots and thousands of lynchings. A Springfield 1908 Race Riot National Monument could help teach our nation about an important yet tragic part of our history and how these injustices manifested, as well as the heroism of those that stood against violence and oppression.

LCV and IEC support adding archeological sites to the National Park System to preserve their historic resources and provide a memorial to honor riot victims and their descendants. We encourage the NPS to tell the story of the founding of the NAACP in 1909, Ida B. Wells-Barnett's advocacy for racial justice and the NAACP leadership to fight the scourge of lynching and race riots including their advocacy following the 1919 Red Summer and other riots and the Tulsa Race Massacre. We believe that the Lincoln Home National Historic Site offers management efficiencies for the proposed monument to meet

its goals as a place for learning and healing. We encourage the NPS to provide visitor experience, public access, and educational opportunities in partnership with the NAACP and local stakeholders.

LCV and IEC support:

- on-site interpretation, visitor experience and access
- a community-led memorial to riot victims, their descendants and the community.
- partnerships with stakeholders to interpret other sites (such as lynching sites, local historic resources, public buildings and museum collections).

LCV and IEC support the designation of the site as a National Monument. The Springfield 1908 story is ready to be told to a national audience as part of the National Park System. Thank you for your leadership, and we look forward to working with the NPS in the event the Monument is established.

Sincerely,



Benjamin Alexandro  
Senior Government Affairs Advocate  
League of Conservation Voters



Jennifer Walling  
Executive Director  
Illinois Environmental Council