

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 9, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of The United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave N.W.
Washington. DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

We write to respectfully request that you posthumously award Reverend James Lawson, a true icon of the civil rights movement, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Reverend Lawson's lifelong commitment to nonviolent activism and his unwavering dedication to social justice have left an indelible mark on American history. As a key strategist and organizer of the civil rights movement, Reverend Lawson played a pivotal role in advancing the cause of equality and justice for all Americans.

Born in 1928 in Pennsylvania, Reverend Lawson spent his formative years deeply influenced by his family's commitment to social justice. While studying at Baldwin Wallace College, his convictions were shaped by his Christian faith and the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi on nonviolent resistance. Despite being drafted during the Korean War, Lawson declared himself a conscientious objector due to his beliefs against violence, which led to his imprisonment. This experience solidified his resolve to dedicate his life to social activism, particularly in civil rights. Inspired by the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Lawson found his calling in organizing nonviolent protests and training activists in the principles of nonviolent resistance, becoming a key strategist and educator within the movement.

From his instrumental involvement in the Nashville, TN sit-in movement to his leadership in the Memphis, TN sanitation workers' strike, Reverend Lawson's courage and moral clarity have inspired generations of activists and advocates. His teachings on nonviolent resistance not only shaped the course of the civil rights movement but also influenced movements for social change around the world. In addition to being an apostle of nonviolent protest, Reverend Lawson was a prominent faith leader in Los Angeles, where he pastored the Holman Methodist Church for 25 years.

Reverend Lawson's contributions to the advancement of civil rights and human dignity are immeasurable, and it is only fitting that his remarkable legacy be honored with the highest civilian honor bestowed by our nation, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. By recognizing

Reverend Lawson's extraordinary achievements, we not only pay tribute to his lifelong commitment to justice but also reaffirm our nation's values of equality, freedom, and dignity for all.

Reverend Lawson's tireless advocacy for civil rights and social justice are clear reasons why he deserves the honor of posthumously receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Such a gesture would honor Reverend Lawson's remarkable life in the wake of his death on June 9th, 2024, at the age of 95 and serve as an ongoing commitment to his life's pursuit of justice and equality for all.

Thank you for your consideration of Reverend James Lawson for the Presidential Medal of Freedom. We trust that you will give due consideration to this request to honor Reverend Lawson's extraordinary legacy.

Sincerely,



Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



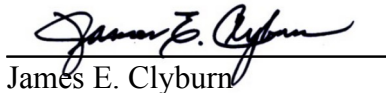
Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



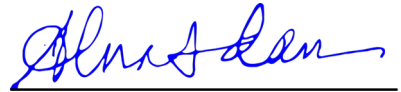
Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



James E. Clyburn



Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



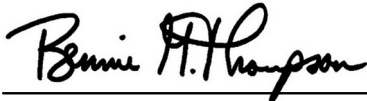
Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress




Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress



Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress




Troy Carter
Member of Congress



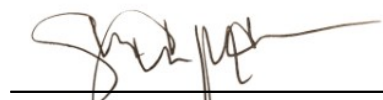
Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



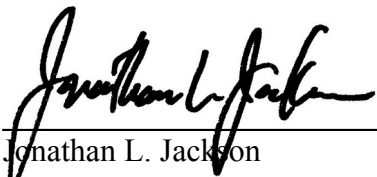
Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



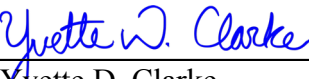
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



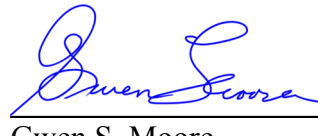
Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress