NEWS RELEASE

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CANADA RECOGNIZES THE NOOSE AS A HATE SYMBOL IN LANDMARK ANTI-HATE LEGISLATION

Black Opportunity Fund Applauds Parliament for Closing a Critical Gap in Canada's Criminal Code with Passage of Bill C-9

OTTAWA – June 18, 2026 - The Black Opportunity Fund (BOF) today welcomes the passage of Bill C-9, the *Combatting Hate Act* - landmark federal legislation designed to combat the significant rise of hate-motivated crime across Canada, strengthen protections for vulnerable communities, and ensure that symbols of terror have no place in Canadian public life. The passage of this legislation includes a Senate-introduced amendment, championed by BOF with the support of 420 Black community leaders, that designates the noose as a prohibited hate symbol under Canadian law.

Since 2019, the number of hate crimes has doubled in Canada according to RCMP and Statistics Canada data. Of all the groups that have been the targets of hate and intimidation, Black Canadians remain the *most* frequently targeted group in the country.

“By including the noose in Bill C-9, Parliament has taken an important step toward ensuring that Canadian law reflects the lived experiences of Black Canadians and recognizes one of the most notorious symbols of racial terror,” said Craig Wellington, CEO, Black Opportunity Fund. “We commend Minister Fraser, his staff, Senators, and Members of Parliament from many parties for recognizing this gap and taking action to address it. This amendment acknowledges both Canada's history and the reality that the noose continues to be used today to intimidate, threaten, and terrorize Black Canadians.”

Nicholas Marcus Thompson, Co-Chair of the National Employment Equity Council, welcomed the amendment and the role that Black organizations played in securing its passage.

“For generations, Black Canadians have had to fight to have the realities of anti-Black racism recognized. The inclusion of the noose in Bill C-9 is an important step because it acknowledges a symbol that has long been used to terrorize, intimidate, and threaten Black communities. This achievement reflects the persistent advocacy of Black community leaders and organizations, including the Black Opportunity Fund, which worked tirelessly to ensure that the experiences of Black Canadians were recognized in

this legislation. We welcome this important step and look forward to continued action to address anti-Black racism in all its forms."

The Noose as a Symbol of Hate in Canada

The noose has a long and documented history as an instrument of racial terror in Canada, including against Black and Indigenous peoples. This history is not confined to the past. In recent years, nooses have been discovered at Toronto construction sites, including transit projects, hospitals, and commercial developments. In Nova Scotia, nooses have been used to target Black families and communities. At an Alberta hospital, a Black surgical assistant arrived at work to find a noose hung on the door of the operating room - placed there by a White surgeon, and directed explicitly at him.

"These incidents demonstrate why this amendment was necessary," said Wellington. "The noose is not simply a historical artifact. When it appears in workplaces, schools, neighbourhoods, and public spaces, its meaning is unmistakable. It is intended to intimidate. It is intended to threaten. It is intended to remind Black people of a history of racial violence. Parliament has now recognized that reality in law."

Working together to address Anti-Black Racism

The passage of Bill C-9 is a milestone, not a finish line. Anti-Black racism remains systemic and pervasive, but progress is being made. The Black Opportunity Fund works to address anti-Black racism through advocacy, investment in Black Canadian businesses and non-profits, and through partnerships with governments and institutions committed to meaningful change and impact.

"This amendment is not the end of the conversation on anti-Black racism," said Wellington. "But it is an important statement that Canada is prepared to recognize anti-Black hate when it appears, understand how it manifests itself, and take meaningful action to protect communities from it."

About the Black Opportunity Fund

The Black Opportunity Fund is a national charitable organization dedicated to fighting anti-Black racism and fostering socio-economic empowerment within Canada's Black communities. Through strategic investment, advocacy, and partnerships, BOF works to dismantle systemic barriers and build pathways to prosperity for Black Canadians in every province and territory.

For more information, visit www.blackopportunityfund.ca

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