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Senate to Aton for Lynching Ban Delays

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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WASHINGTON (AP) -- The Senate seldom says it's sorry, although it is now ready to officially express its remorse over the failure to outlaw lynching in the United States.

A resolution that the chamber was likely to take up Monday voices regret for the Senate's unwillingness for years to pass a law stopping a crime that cost the lives of over 4,700 people, mostly blacks, between 1882 and 1968.

Doria Dee Johnson, the great-great granddaughter of a black South Carolina farmer who was killed by a white mob nearly a century ago, was to be on hand for the floor vote.

The Evanston, Ill., woman has said that her family "lost property and family solidarity that still affects us today" when Anthony Crawford, a wealthy cotton farmer, was killed in 1916 by several hundred residents of Abbeville, S.C. Ms. Johnson today is an author and frequent lecturer on the subject of lynchings.

In the past, efforts to pass such legislation fell victim to Senate filibusters despite pleas for its passage by seven presidents, among others, between 1890 and 1952.

The Senate resolution is sponsored by Sens. Mary Landrieu, D-La., and George Allen, R-Va. The bill, likely to be subject to a voice vote, states that nearly 200 anti-lynching bills were introduced in the first half of the 20th century but that nothing got through.

The nonbinding measure apologizes for this failure and expresses "most solemn regrets of the Senate to the descendants of victims of lynching."

Landrieu's spokesman, Adam Sharp, said that Johnson was expected to be joined in the Senate by other descendants of victims, including a cousin of Emmett Till, the black teenager killed in Mississippi 50 years ago, reportedly for whistling at a white woman. The FBI earlier this month exhumed Till's body to search for clues to his slaying.

Landrieu called lynching and mob violence were "an American form of terrorism" documented in at least 46 states.