



NEWS RELEASE
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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Issues Statement Requesting Pardon of Jack Johnson

Washington, DC -- The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (“Commission”), by unanimous vote, issued a statement urging that President Obama posthumously pardon John Arthur “Jack” Johnson for a racially motivated conviction handed down by an all-white jury in 1913. Mr. Johnson, the son of former slaves, rose to become boxing’s heavyweight champion of the world in 1908 and was inducted into the Boxing Hall of Fame in 1954. His life was cut tragically short by a fatal car accident on June 10, 1946. The Commission joins the 114th Congress in requesting the President to right this century-old wrong. The full statement can be viewed here: http://www.usccr.gov/press/2016/PR_JackJohnsonStatement.pdf.

Commission Chairman Martin R. Castro stated on behalf of the Commission, “The story of integration and advancement of civil rights in America is often spearheaded by athletes. Such is the case of Jack Johnson, the first African-American Heavyweight Boxing Champion. He allowed America and the world to see that a Black man could be ‘the greatest.’ Yet, he was rewarded by injustice. The time has come for the record to be set right and for Jack Johnson to be awarded in death, what he did not have in life, justice.”

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and issuing a federal civil rights enforcement report. For information about Commission’s reports and meetings, visit <http://www.usccr.gov>.