



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1040

Resolution calling upon the United States Congress to pass and the President to Sign S.1083/ H.R. 40 in relation to establishing the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-Americans to examine financial and other impacts of slavery and continued discrimination and recommend appropriate remedies.

By Council Members Barron, Miller, Cornegy, Ampry-Samuel, Van Bramer, Rosenthal, Cabán and Eugene

Whereas, Millions of enslaved Africans in the United States spent their lives providing unpaid skilled labor and were subject to execution, torture, extreme physical abuse, systemic and state sanctioned rape and sexual violence; and

Whereas, As early as 1627, slavery flourished in New York state, constituting an immoral and inhumane deprivation of Africans' life, liberty, citizenship rights and cultural heritage, and by 1730, New York City was the second-largest slave-owning city in the country; and

Whereas, Slavery's impact on New York remains significant and perpetuates a growing wealth disparity and socioeconomic disposition that African-Americans today face as a result of historical, discriminatory policies and ongoing segregation; and

Whereas, In 2006, the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) adopted a Resolution establishing the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law; and

Whereas, According to the aforementioned Resolution, adequate, effective and prompt reparation is intended to promote justice by remedying gross violations of international human rights law or serious violations of international humanitarian law and should be proportional to the gravity of the violations and the harm suffered; and

Whereas, The UN outlines five conditions that must be met for full reparations, including cessation or assurance of non-repetition, restitution, compensation, satisfaction and rehabilitation; and

Whereas, The National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America defines reparations as a process of repairing, healing and restoring a people injured because of their group identity and in violation of their fundamental human rights by governments, corporations, institutions and families; and

Whereas, The Movement for Black Lives, also recognized as “M4BL,” identifies several ongoing harms to Black people in the United States to which reparations are owed including, but not limited to, police and state violence, mass criminalization, incarceration, institutionalization, deportation, exclusion, segregation, structural employment and housing discrimination, food and service apartheid and denial of health care; and

Whereas, M4BL identifies additional harms to Black people, including lower than average life expectancy, forced sterilization, denial of reproductive care and autonomy in Black communities, as well as high rates of maternal and infant mortality and stress-related conditions; and

Whereas, S.1083/ H.R.40, sponsored by Senator Corey Booker and Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, and has been regularly introduced since 1989 by Representative John Conyers, requires the United States to acknowledge the lasting impacts of slavery and establish and execute a plan to address those impacts Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African-Americans; and

Whereas, The Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African-Americans would identify the role of federal and state governments in supporting the institution of slavery, forms of discrimination in the public and private sectors against freed slaves and their descendants, and lingering negative effects of slavery on the lives of Black people and society today; and

Whereas, The systematic exploitation, violence, theft, and harm to Black people today is inherited from centuries of policies and practices perpetuated by the United States government, individuals, and corporations that must also be accounted for including convict leasing, sharecropping, Jim Crow, redlining, and the War on Drugs; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Congress to pass and the President to Sign S.1083/ H.R. 40 in relation to establishing the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-Americans to examine financial and other impacts of slavery and continued discrimination and recommend appropriate remedies.

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