

BILL SUMMARY: H.R. 40/S.40

COMMISSION TO STUDY AND DEVELOP REPARATION PROPOSALS FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS ACT

ESTABLISHES THE COMMISSION TO STUDY AND DEVELOP REPARATION PROPOSALS FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS TO EXAMINE SLAVERY AND DISCRIMINATION IN THE COLONIES AND THE UNITED STATES FROM 1619 TO THE PRESENT AND RECOMMEND APPROPRIATE REMEDIES.

OUR POSITION

Racism is a sin. From our beginning, a commitment to advancing racial justice and reconciliation has been at the heart of Sojourners' mission, ministry, and work. The legacy of slavery, segregation, racial violence, and of the dehumanization of African Americans in this country continues to manifest today. Sojourners is calling on the church and the nation to repent from the evils of racism, white nationalism, and white supremacy, which are an assault on the image of God.

HIGHLIGHT OF SUPPORTERS

- Sojourners
- ACLU
- Amnesty International
- Bread for the World
- Church World Service (CWS)
- Color Change
- Columbia Law School Human Rights Institute
- Council of Jewish Women
- Drug Policy Alliance
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
- Franciscan Action Network
- Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)
- Human Rights Watch
- The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
- National African American Reparations Commission (NAARC)
- National Council of Churches (NCC)
- NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
- Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC)
- Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference (SDPC)
- The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society

LEADING SPONSORS

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX)
Sen. Corey Booker (D-NJ)

CURRENT SPONSORS*

House: 196
Senate: 22

*as of 02.09.22

WHAT THE BILL WOULD DO

This bill would establish an expert federal commission to study the legacy of slavery in the United States and its ongoing harm and develop proposals for redress and repair, including reparations.

Specifically, the bill would:

- Establish a commission to study and develop reparation proposals for African-Americans;
- Examine slavery and discrimination in the colonies and the U.S. from 1619 to the present and recommend appropriate remedies;
- Identify the role of Federal and state governments in supporting the institution of slavery;
- Identify forms of discrimination in the public and private sectors against freed slaves and their descendants;
- Identify lingering negative effects of slavery on living African-Americans and society;
- Recommend ways to educate the American Public about the Commission's findings; and,
- Recommend appropriate redress actions.

WHY CONGRESS SHOULD ENACT THIS LEGISLATION¹

- Heads of white households who only have a high school diploma are sitting on almost 10 times more wealth than Black households with the same level of education. If Black families did "everything right," the advanced degrees would still allow them to accumulate less wealth than a white family whose head of household only had a high school diploma. They'd be disproportionately denied mortgages and fair lending rates regardless of their incomes;
- School districts that serve higher populations of Black and brown students receive \$23 billion less in funding compared to mostly white school districts, even though they serve the same number of children;
- Experts say that systemic racism is leaving Black people with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, causing harm to their immune systems, premature aging, and in Washington, DC, life expectancies that are a staggering 14.9 years shorter than white residents'—all while Black people are less likely than white people to have access to mental health services and more likely to receive inadequate quality of care;
- We can no longer afford to wait. Through the broken promise of "40 acres and a mule," formerly enslaved Black people and their descendants managed to own 14 million acres of land at the start of the 20th century, while today at least 90 percent of that land is not in their possession, due to systemic oppression, targeted racist violence, and an inequitable legal system.

ASSOCIATION CONTACTS

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¹ National African-American Reparations Commission. (2020, August 3). US: Congress should pass reparations bill. National African-American Reparations Commission (NAARC). Retrieved February 1, 2022, from <https://reparationscomm.org/naarc-news/press-releases/us-congress-should-pass-reparations-bill/>.