

H.R. 40, the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act

Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley (MA-07) & Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ)

Background

Approximately 4,000,000 Africans and their descendants were enslaved in the United States and colonies that became the United States from 1619 to 1865. The institution of slavery was constitutionally and statutorily sanctioned by the government of the United States from 1789 through 1865 and proceeded by very reprehensible de jure and de facto discrimination against freed Black people and their descendants from the end of the Civil War to the present, including economic, political, educational, and social discrimination. The dehumanization and atrocities of slavery were not isolated occurrences but were mandated by federal laws that were codified and enshrined into the Constitution.

While state and local officials have taken action, including in [Tennessee](#), [Massachusetts](#), [Illinois](#), [North Carolina](#) and [Oklahoma](#), there must be an official federal government initiative to understand the effects of centuries of enslavement and legalized discrimination of Black people. America cannot ignore the disproportionate and unjust traumas of centuries-long history of racial division and exploitation that have contributed to generations of economic instability in America's Black communities.

Bill Summary

H.R. 40, *the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act*, would establish a national commission to examine the legacy of slavery and develop proposals for the institution of slavery, its subsequent racial and economic discrimination against African Americans, and the lasting impact of these harmful forces on living African Americans. The Commission established by H.R. 40 will be charged to make recommendations to Congress on appropriate remedies and shall be composed of 15 members, who shall be appointed, within 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act as follows:

- Three members shall be appointed by the President;
- Three members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- Three members shall be appointed by the President pro tempore of the Senate; and
- Six members shall be subject-matter experts on racial justice, economics, civil rights, reparatory justice, and related fields.

CONGRESSWOMAN
Ayanna Pressley
MASSACHUSETTS 7TH DISTRICT

Endorsements

AjabuSpeaks, All Souls Movement, Alliance of Baptists, American Humanist Association, Amnesty International USA, Bend the Arc: Jewish Action, Black Music Action Coalition, Black Veterans Project, Blackroots Alliance, BLIS Collective, California Black Power Network, Center for LGBTQ Economic Advancement & Research (CLEAR), Colombia Acuerdo de Paz NGO, Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), DC Justice Lab, DC Reparations Coalition, Democrats Abroad Reparations Task Force, Disciples Center for Public Witness (Disciples of Christ), Empowerment Temple, Reparation Education Project, Episcopal City Mission, FirstRepair, Freedom Road Consulting, LLC, Friends Committee on National Legislation, Get Free, Human Rights Watch, Humanity2020 Group LLC, Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti, Japanese American Citizens League, Johnson & Klein Law, Justice for the 110, KC Reparations Coalition, Loc Community Association, Loyola Law School, Los Angeles Anti Racism Center (LARC), Make It Plain, Marijuana Justice, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, Media 2070, Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Movement for Black Lives, NAACP, National Action Network Education Team, National African American Reparations Commission, National Black Justice Collective, National Council of Churches, National Council of Jewish Women, National LGBTQ+ Bar Association, National Urban League, NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice, New Yorkers 4 Reparations, Northampton Reparations Study Commission, Not In Our Town, Princeton, NP/NCRR - Nikkei Progressives & Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress, Pax Christi Metro DC-Baltimore, Pax Christi USA, RebuildingTheCommun7ty, Reparation Generation, Reparations Finance Lab, Reparations Interfaith Coalition of Massachusetts, Reparations United, Reparations4Slavery, San Francisco Bay Area Black & Jewish Unity Coalition, Sanctuary of Hope, SCOPE LA, Showing Up for Racial Justice, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team, South Bend Reparations Working Group (SBRWG), State of Loc Nation Global Public Benefit Corp, Terence Crutcher Foundation, The Episcopal Church, The Southern Poverty Law Center, The United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society, Tsuru for Solidarity, Tulsa African Ancestral Society, Union for Reform Judaism, Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice, United By Equity, United Church of Christ, USTRHT, Virago Strategies, Why We Can't Wait Reparations Coalition, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Young LLC