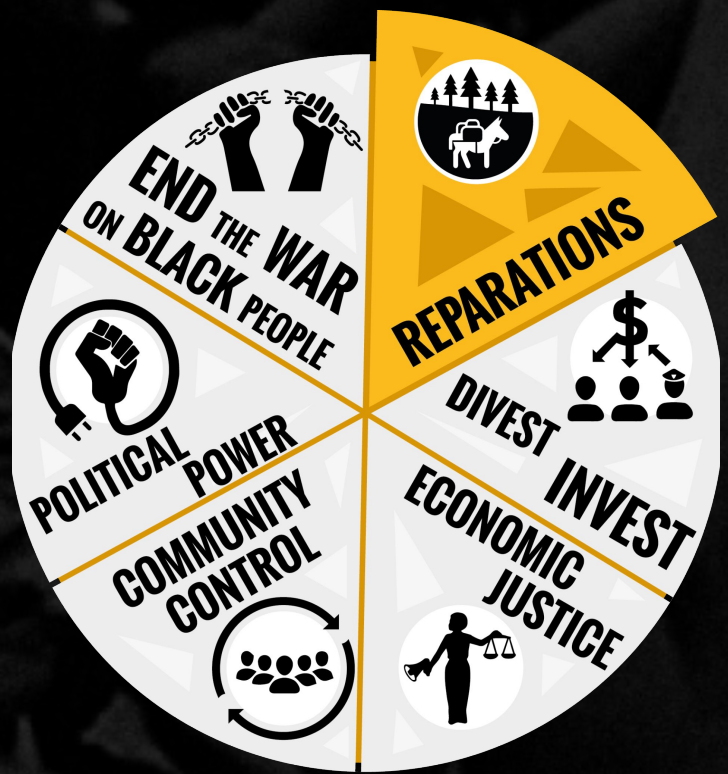


A VISION FOR BLACK LIVES

POLICY DEMANDS FOR BLACK POWER, FREEDOM, & JUSTICE

IMMEDIATE
PASSAGE
of **HR 40**



M4BL

THE MOVEMENT
FOR BLACK LIVES

IMMEDIATE PASSAGE OF HR 40



ACTION: Pass Legislation at the federal level that requires the United States to acknowledge the lasting impacts of slavery, establish and execute a plan to address those impacts. This includes the immediate passage of H.R.40, the “Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act” and subsequent legislation establishing reparations remedies.



INTRODUCTION

The kidnapping, torture, enslavement, forced labor, family separation, and forced reproduction of Africans and African descended people, along with colonization, theft of land and genocide of Indigenous peoples, served as the foundation of the U.S. economy since its inception.

The Movement for Black Lives calls for full and comprehensive reparations to all affected African nations, and to all descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States, for the devastating and genocidal harms flowing from colonialism, the transatlantic slave trade and the institution of chattel slavery in the United States. We demand reparations for past and continuing, and future harms flowing from colonialism, chattel slavery, state sanctioned terror and segregation, land theft, mass incarceration and surveillance and their continuing impacts.

Additionally, we call for reparations to all African descended people in the United States for harms flowing from the “badges and incidents” of slavery: state-sanctioned segregation and racial terror of the Jim Crow era, and the ongoing effects of centuries of racial segregation, discrimination, and structural exclusion.

We call for reparations for all Black people in the U.S. who have been subject to practices representing a continuation of harms inflicted in the context of chattel slavery, including family separation, state sponsored sterilization and medical experimentation, mass criminalization and incarceration constituting the “new Jim Crow,” and for the violence, institutionalization, discrimination and structural exclusion specifically targeting disabled Black people, and disabling Black people. Finally, we call for reparations for all Black people who have been harmed by the U.S. government's anti-Black immigration policies and practices, including those who have been deported pursuant to these policies.

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. government, responsible corporations, educational, religious, philanthropic and other institutions that have profited off of labor, bodies, and lives of Black people — from colonialism to slavery to Jim Crow to ongoing educational, employment, food and housing segregation, structural exclusion and discrimination, mass incarceration, and surveillance — must repair the harm done. Reparations must be made in full for these violations of international law, and must include full compensation for stolen lives, labor, children, wages, land, businesses, homes, health, well-being, sexual, gender and reproductive autonomy, culture, language, and spirituality, and for torture, rape, and other forms of physical and sexual violence.

Consistent with our commitment to amplifying the particular experiences of state gendered violence that Black queer, trans, gender nonconforming, women and intersex people face, we also demand reparations for the harms and ongoing impacts of the forced imposition of patriarchy on Black people, the construction and enforcement of racialized gender norms to exclude and justify violence against Black women, girls, trans, nonbinary and gender nonconforming people, systemic and systematic rape, sexual torture and degradation, forced abortion, forced parenting and caregiving, separation from children through forced labor, sale and high infant mortality rates caused by the conditions of enslavement, separation from family members, medical and gynecological experimentation, forced sterilization, shackling during labor and delivery inherent to chattel slavery and its aftermath. We also demand reparations historical and ongoing oppression of Black disabled people through institutionalization and torture in state institutions and hospitals, denial of care and resources to meet basic needs, and the disabling effects of slavery, state terror, and structural state violence, discrimination and exclusion.



WHAT IS THE PROBLEMS?

As the National African American Reparations Commission states in its Preliminary Reparations Program:

No amount of material resources or monetary compensation can ever be sufficient restitution for the spiritual, mental, cultural and physical damages inflicted on Africans by centuries of the MAAFA, the holocaust of enslavement and the institution of chattel slavery. These crimes against Black humanity, as affirmed by the Durban Declaration and Program of Action, were responsible for the death of millions of Africans who were ripped from their families and nations to labor for the enrichment of industries, commercial and financial institutions and individuals in Europe and the United States. In large measure the wealth of the new American nation was accumulated from the centuries of free labor, brutally extracted from enslaved Africans. With the "abolition" of slavery the "emancipated" sons and daughters of Africa suffered systematic, often violent repression, oppression, exploitation and deprivation under southern apartheid and de facto segregation in every region of this nation.

A political and economic system infected with white supremacy and structural/institutional racism persisted in retarding the dreams and aspirations of a people courageously striving to sustain families, build institutions and create healthy communities in a hostile land. The devastating damages of enslavement and systems of apartheid and de facto segregation spanned generations to negatively affect the collective well being of Africans in America to this very moment. Indeed, despite the civil rights/human rights "gains" achieved by the Black Freedom Struggle, the crises that continue to plague millions of Black people are incontrovertible proof that the disease of white supremacy still permeates the socio-economic and political culture, structures, institutions and systems of this society.

The fulfillment of a “more perfect union” is not possible without an unequivocal acknowledgement of, and unqualified apology for, the “original sins” committed by the European colonialists in brutally dispossessing the Native people of their lands and the horrific enslavement of Africans to be the economic lifeblood of the “American nation;” a nation conceived to be a “White man’s land.” A more perfect union must be predicated on a new covenant, which acknowledges the crimes against humanity committed by European colonialists, the “founding fathers” of this nation and their progeny, and the granting of reparations as restitution to repair and heal the damages done to Native people and Africans.





THE DEMAND

Reparations is defined by the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA) 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.

In addition to being a demand for justice, reparations is a principle of international human rights law. The United Nations Basic Principles 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 provides that "reparation must, as far as possible, wipe out all consequences of the illegal act and re-establish the situation which would, in all probability, have existed if the act had not been committed."

The UN recognizes the following five forms of reparations: 1) restitution, including restoration of a victim's rights, property, and citizenship status; 2) rehabilitation, including psychological and physical support; 3) compensation; 4) satisfaction, including acknowledgement of guilt, apology, burials, construction of memorials, etc.; and 5) cessation and guarantees of non-repetition, including reformation of laws and civil and political structures that led to or fueled violence, and those that continue to do so.

RESTITUTION:

People of African descent in the United States have experienced gross violations of international human rights through brutal extraction of our ancestors' labor through chattel slavery and ongoing extraction of the value and fruits of our labor through capitalism. Larry Neal, an economist at the University of Illinois, concluded that at least \$1.4 trillion (in 1983 dollars) was owed to the descendants of enslaved Africans based on the compensation their ancestors did not receive for their labor between 1620 and 1840. With interest, that amounts to \$6.4 trillion in 2014, according to The New Republic. People of African descent are also entitled to compensation from the U.S. government for land stolen from Black farmers and families, with the understanding that the U.S. government originally stole the land from the Indigenous peoples of North America, who are owed full reparations from the U.S. government for colonization and theft of these lands and genocide of its peoples. Finally, people of African descent are entitled to restitution for businesses, homes, and possessions stolen, burned or otherwise destroyed through state sanctioned terror.



THE DEMAND

REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION:

People of African descent in the United States are entitled to compensation and resources for rehabilitation and repair for gross violations of international human rights through violent kidnapping from our homelands, torture, forced marches to shipping centers, the horrors of the transatlantic crossing, systemic and systematic rape and sexual torture and degradation, forced abortion, forced parenting and caregiving, separation from children through high infant mortality caused by the conditions of enslavement, separation from family members, medical and gynecological experimentation, forced sterilization, and injury, disability and loss of life through kidnapping, the Middle Passage, conditions of slavery, torture, lynching, forced military service, Jim Crow segregation, and the ongoing anti-Black structural discrimination and exclusion that is the legacy of slavery in the U.S.

SATISFACTION

Satisfaction, acknowledgement, and reparations for cultural and spiritual harms could include creation of multi-media depictions of the history of Black people of African descent and textbooks for educational institutions that tell the story from the African descendants' perspective; development of historical monuments and museums; the return of artifacts and art to appropriate people or institutions.

NON-REPETITION

Guarantees of non-repetition must include exoneration of political prisoners; and, the elimination of laws and practices that maintain dual systems in the major areas of life including the punishment system, health, education and the financial/economic system.



THE DEMAND

Reparations are owed, in a form and manner to be determined by Black people in the United States. Reparations requires a systematic accounting, acknowledgement and repair of past and ongoing harms, monetary compensation to individuals and institutions led by and accountable to Black communities, and an end to present day policies and practices that perpetuate harms rooted in a history of anti-Black racism, along with a guarantee that they will not be repeated.

The right to reparations is both individual and collective, for harms past, present, and future, and is focused on what is necessary to repair the harms. Reparations may take the form of cash payments to individuals, repatriation resources, particularly for those who are descendants of enslaved Africans, cash payments to Black controlled infrastructure and community trusts for scholarships, economic investment, and investment in existing institutions serving the Black community, made on condition of ensuring that these institutions effectively meet the needs of Black communities and do not further contribute to surveillance, criminalization, and punishment of Black people.

Reparations must also address ongoing harms of the vestiges, badges, and incidents of colonialism and slavery, including police and state violence, mass criminalization, incarceration, institutionalization, deportation, and exclusion, segregation & structural employment and housing discrimination, food and medical apartheid, denial of health care and high rates of disability and stress-related conditions, including high blood pressure, diabetes, high rates of maternal and infant mortality and lower than average life expectancy, forced sterilization and denial of reproductive care and autonomy. The forms of reparations received should improve the lives of African descendants in the United States for future generations to come; foster economic, social and political parity; and allow for full rights of self-determination.



THE DEMAND

Reparations must take as many forms as necessary to equitably address the many forms of injury caused by chattel slavery and its continuing vestiges, including:

1. Compensation for the direct value of labor extracted, the value generated with the profits of labor extracted over time, and for harm and trauma inflicted;
2. Investments in trusts, infrastructure, and services for Black people, including community trusts for scholarships, housing and purchase of land, creation of Black institutions, and investment in new and existing institutions serving Black communities that are accountable to and effectively meet the needs of Black communities, and do not further contribute to surveillance, criminalization, and punishment of Black people;
3. Free universal health care, including mental health care, and access to multiple forms of healing to address ongoing traumas of the ongoing legacy of slavery; universal childcare, and other entitlements tailored to continuing harms of slavery and its aftermath.



THE DEMAND

The passage and enactment of H.R. 40 at the federal level would establish a national Commission tasked with developing and considering specific proposals to ensure full reparations to people of African descent in the United States. Passage of similar legislation at the state and local levels would create mechanisms for state and local governments and institutions to begin the process of reparations and repair.

HOW DO THESE SOLUTIONS ADDRESS THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF SOME OF THE MOST MARGINALIZED BLACK PEOPLE?

Full reparations for violations, harms, and structural exclusion across generations of African descendants in the U.S. will benefit all people of African descent in the U.S., and particularly members of Black communities who have been most marginalized and dispossessed by these conditions.



FEDERAL ACTION:

M4BL joins the National African American Reparations Commission (NAARC) and National Coalition of Black for Reparations in America (N'COBRA) in calling for concrete commitments and specific steps toward making reparations for Black people in the U.S. a reality, including:

- ◆ Passage of House Resolution 40 (H.R. 40) to create a federal commission to consider specific proposals to acknowledge, compensate, repair, redress, and cease past and continuing harms flowing from the institution of chattel slavery, Jim Crow laws, and generations of racially discriminatory and exclusionary policies and practices, including those resulting in mass incarceration and criminalization of Black people in the United States.



STATE ACTION:

- ❖ **Pass state resolutions in support of passage and enforcement of H.R. 40.**
- ❖ **Pass legislation establishing a state commission to study the impact of the slave trade and profit from the labor of enslaved Africans in the state, as well as the impacts of Black Codes, Jim Crow segregation, convict leasing, and ongoing structural discrimination and exclusion and develop proposals for reparations.**





LOCAL ACTION:

- ❖ **Pass state resolutions in support of passage and enforcement of H.R. 40.**
- ❖ **Pass local legislation requiring government, corporate, religious or non-profit entities to publicly disclose profits or benefits obtained from slavery and make reparations.**

MODEL LEGISLATION

- ❖ [Kansas City Local Resolution in Support of HR40](#)
- ❖ [Illinois House Resolution 1011](#) “Requests President Obama to commission a study to detail the economic impact of the slave trade and the use of slave labor; and how Emancipation, while freeing them of their literal bonds, and ending an immoral practice, did not guarantee equality in education, employment, housing, and access to quality affordable health care; that this study also include an analysis for how reparations for past harms have benefited ethnic groups that have received them during the course of U.S. history; and a proposal for reparations to the descendants of slaves in the U.S., and how those reparations can help overcome obstacles that still exist today in education, employment, housing, health care, and justice.”
- ❖ City of [Evanston, IL Reparations Resolution](#)
- ❖ City of [Asheville, NC Reparations Resolution](#)
- ❖ In 2015 the [City of Chicago](#) created a reparations package for victims of police torture under Jon Burge, including a [\\$5.5 million fund](#) (the torture victims originally requested [\\$20 million](#)); a formal apology from the Chicago City Council; creation of a permanent memorial recognizing the victims; an agreement to teach public school students about the case in their 8th and 10th grade history classes; free city college tuition and job training to victims, their immediate family members and their grandchildren; and funded psychological, family, substance abuse, and other counseling services to victims and their immediate family members.
- ❖ In 2005 Philadelphia passed a "Business, Corporate and Slavery Era Insurance Ordinance" to promote full and accurate disclosure to the public about any slavery policies sold by any companies, or profits from slavery by other industries (or their predecessors) who are doing business with any City Agency or City-related Agency.

RESOURCES

- ❖ M4BL Reparations Now Toolkit
- ❖ National African American Reparations Commission (NAARC) [Preliminary Reparations Program](#)
- ❖ N'COBRA [HR40 Primer](#)

ORGANIZATIONS CURRENTLY WORKING ON POLICY

**NATIONAL AFRICAN
AMERICAN
REPARATIONS
COMMISSION
(NAARC)**

**NATIONAL COALITION
OF BLACKS FOR
REPARATIONS IN
AMERICA (N'COBRA)**

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