



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 219

Resolution calling upon the Congress of the United States to hold fact-finding hearings to establish and define the bases and justifications for the government of the United States to pay reparations to African-American descendants of African ancestors who were held in slavery in this country, and its original colonies, between 1619 and 1865.

By Council Members Foster, Barron, Comrie, Perkins, Sanders, Seabrook, Serrano, Stewart and Vann; also Council Member Clarke

Whereas, The United States government has never acknowledged or taken responsibility for its role in the enslavement of Africans and the promotion of white supremacy; and

Whereas, The experience of enslavement, segregation, and discrimination continues to limit the life choices and opportunities of African-Americans; and

Whereas, African-Americans have sought repeatedly to improve their educational status, economic condition, and living situation and have been held back by prejudice, lawless white violence and official indifference thereto; and

Whereas, African-Americans have sought repeatedly to obtain reparations in the courts of the United States and through appeals to its government ever since the de jure end of slavery and have been unjustly denied relief; and

Whereas, All Americans and the United States government have benefited enormously, and continue to benefit, from the unjust expropriation of uncompensated labor by enslaved Africans, the subordination and segregation of the descendants of the enslaved, as well as from discrimination against African-Americans; and

Whereas, The United States government has acknowledged and taken responsibility for its role in the unjust internment of Japanese-Americans during the second World War and has undertaken to pay reparations to the internees and their successors and to apologize for the unjust abrogation of their rights; and

Whereas, The principle that reparations is the appropriate remedy whenever a government unjustly abrogates the rights of a domestic group or foreign people whose rights such government is obligated to protect or uphold has been internationally recognized; and

Whereas, The United States government has acceded to and approved the above stated reparations principle on the basis of treaty obligations and through its numerous actions in support of reparations on behalf of Jewish survivors of the Holocaust and their successors; and

Whereas, Individual states of the United States have undertaken to pay reparations to portions of the African-American community within their jurisdictions who have suffered specific harm due to white violence and official inaction to prevent or correct such harm in a timely fashion or to punish the perpetrators; and

Whereas, The harms inflicted on the African-American community as a whole and the debt owed to African-Americans is subject to exact proof and quantification; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That Council of the City of New York calls upon the Congress of the United States to hold fact-finding hearings to establish and define the bases and justifications for the government of the United States to pay reparations to African-American descendants of African Ancestors who were held in slavery in this country, and its original colonies, between 1619 and 1865.

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