Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	Res 1560-2017	**Version:**	*	**Name:**	Establish the Commission to Study Reparations for African-Americans and to Recommend Remedies. (A.7274/S.5624)
Type:	Resolution			**Status:**	Filed (End of Session)
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Title: Resolution calling upon the State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.7274/S.5624, which would establish the Commission to Study Reparations for African-Americans and to Recommend Remedies.

Sponsors:

Indexes:

Attachments: 1. Assembly Bill, 2. Senate Bill, 3. June 21, 2017 - Stated Meeting Agenda with Links to Files

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
6/21/2017	*	City Council	Introduced by Council	
6/21/2017	*	City Council	Referred to Comm by Council	
12/31/2017	*	City Council	Filed (End of Session)	

Res. No. 1560

Resolution calling upon the State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.7274/S.5624, which would establish the Commission to Study Reparations for African-Americans and to Recommend Remedies.

By Council Member Barron

Whereas, In 1991, during an excavation in preparation for the construction of a new federal building in Lower Manhattan, remains were unearthed revealing one of the largest, known early African-American cemeteries; and

Whereas, The African Burial Ground yielded the intact remains of over 400 men, women and children of African descent, spanning 6.6 acres and dating from the 1690s to the 1790s; and

Whereas, The burial ground served as a reminder that, although slavery in the United States is frequently associated with the early colonies and states of the South, until July 4, 1827 the owning of slaves was legal in New York; and

Whereas, According to the New York Historical Society, 41% of colonial New York City households owned slaves-a level of urban societal penetration that has been compared to Charleston, South Carolina, and

Whereas, At the time of the American Revolution over 10,000 African-Americans inhabited New York City; and

Whereas, In 1626, 11 African slaves were brought to New Amsterdam, as New York City, founded by the Dutch, was originally called, by the Dutch West India Company; and

Whereas, Slave labor cleared the land and built the walls along what would later become Wall Street, the City's first city hall, Trinity Church and Fraunces Tavern among other structures; and

Whereas, In 1711, a slave market was officially established on Wall Street between Pearl and Water Streets, which according to some reports operated for about 50 years; and

Whereas, During the American Revolution, the British dealt slavery in New York City a blow by offering freedom to slaves who would join their ranks; and

Whereas, Over 10,000 slaves came to New York, which was under British control and over 3,000 sailed away with British forces to Canada at the end of the war; and

Whereas, On July 4, 1799, The Gradual Emancipation Act of 1799 was enacted, which freed slave children born after that date, but indentured them until they were adults; and

Whereas, In 1817 the Abolition Act, which freed slaves born before 1799, but only after July 4, 1827; and

Whereas, On the threshold of widespread emancipation, the New York State Constitutional Convention of 1821 removed the property qualifications for ballot access for white men, but imposed a property qualification ($250) for blacks that effectively disenfranchised them; and

Whereas, In acknowledgement of the fundamental injustice of slavery in New York, A07274/S05624 would create the Commission to Study Reparations for African-Americans and to Recommend Remedies ("The Commission") and appropriate $250,000 to cover its expenses; and

Whereas, The Commission would consist of 14 members with one appointee by the Governor, the majority and minority leadership of the State Assembly and Senate-a total of five appointees; and

Whereas, The balance of the Commission would be appointed by the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America, the December 12th Movement and by Dr. Ron Daniels of the Institute of the Black World, with three appointees each; and

Whereas, The Commission would examine the slave trade, including the procurement, transport and sale of African slaves, as well as their treatment throughout this process; and

Whereas, The Commission would examine the institution of slavery that existed in the State and City of New York; and

Whereas, The Commission would examine the treatment of slaves in New York, including their deprivation of freedom, exploitation for labor and the destruction of family and culture; and

Whereas, The Commission would examine the extent to which the federal and state governments of the United States supported the institution of slavery; and

Whereas, The Commission would examine the various forms of discrimination in both the public and private sectors during the period between the Civil War and the present, as well as the lingering effects of the institution of slavery in the present day; and

Whereas, The Commission would recommend appropriate ways to educate the American public of its findings; and

Whereas, The Commission would also recommend remedies for suffering related to slavery, the slave trade and the lingering effects of the trade and the discrimination that followed, including whether the New York State Legislature should offer a formal apology on behalf of the United States for the perpetuation of slavery; and

Whereas, The Commission would also consider whether any form of compensation to the descendants of African slaves is warranted and offer recommendations accordingly; now, therefore, be it

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Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.7274/S.5624, which would establish the Commission to Study Reparations for African-Americans and to Recommend Remedies.

LS 10969
5/31/2017
I.M.