



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1120-2011, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1120

Resolution calling on the Office of the Mayor of New York City to establish a Commission on Queen Mother Moore Reparations for Descendants of Africans of New York City.

By Council Members Barron, Mendez, Palma, Vann and Williams

Whereas, In 1625, the Dutch established the village of New Amsterdam on Manhattan Island and began the wholesale kidnapping and enslavement of African people from the Caribbean and Africa; and

Whereas, African laborers in 1639 worked daily in Manhattan Island's Northern Forest (Upper East Side and Harlem) clearing timber and cutting lumber at the Colony's Sawmill (74th Street and Second Avenue); and

Whereas, These Africans also built farms beyond New Amsterdam, in Staten Island, Brooklyn and Queens; and

Whereas, In 1664, the English won control of New Amsterdam, renaming it New York after the Duke of York, and continued the wholesale thievery of African people from the Caribbean and Africa; and

Whereas, These Africans were forced to provide "free labor" to New York City under British rule, which was even more aggressive and cruel through its participation in the so-called Transatlantic slave trade, one of the greatest crimes committed against humanity; and

Whereas, During New York City's colonial period of enslavement, these Africans cleared land, built houses, paved roads, built forts and bridges, and planted and harvested crops; and

Whereas, The enslavement of Africans in New York City continued after the colonial period when the United States ratified its constitution in 1789, and after New York City abolished slavery in 1827, and did not end until the 1840s; and

Whereas, In short, Africans built New York City's infrastructure and economy without remuneration; and

Whereas, Not only were these Africans never compensated, they were also subjected to the worst kind of rape, torture, brutality and murder the human mind can conjure; and

Whereas, Evidence of this cruelty can be validated by the over 20,000 African ancestral remains located in downtown Manhattan, particularly the 427 of those African ancestral remains that have been excavated from the African Burial Ground located on Duane and Reade Streets; and

Whereas, These Africans are now represented by over 2.1 million people of African ancestry in New York City; and
Whereas, Queen Mother Moore, born Audley F. Moore on July 27, 1898 and passing on to be with the ancestors on May 2, 1997, spent seventy-seven years of her life fighting for Human Rights, Civil Rights, Liberation, Black Nationalism and Reparations for African People; and

Whereas, Queen Mother Moore spent decades of her struggle fighting in Harlem, New York City; and
Whereas, In the early 1960s, Queen Mother Moore formed “The Reparations Committee of Descendants of United States Slaves” to demand reparations for Africans in America from the United States government; she canvassed the country to get over a million signatures to petition the government and was successful in presenting the signatures to President John F. Kennedy; and
Whereas, Queen Mother Moore continued the struggle of I.H. Dickerson and Callie House, who engaged in one of the earliest calls for reparations when they established the “Ex-Slaves Pension Movement” from 1890 to 1920; and
Whereas, Queen Mother Moore joined many other Africans in America in the fight for Reparations, such as Marcus Mosiah Garvey, Malcolm X., Martin Luther King Jr., The Republic of New Africa, The National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America, The December 12th Movement, The Black Radical Congress, The Patrice Lumumba Coalition, United African Movement, National Action Network, The Black United Front, The Unity Party and countless others; and

Whereas, It is imperative that a Queen Mother Moore Reparations for Descendants of Africans of New York City Commission be established to continue the work started by Queen Mother Moore; and

Whereas, Such a commission should be created by individuals and organizations of the New African Community of New York City in conjunction with the Black, Latino and Asian Caucus of the City Council; and

Whereas, The Queen Mother Moore Reparations for Descendants of Africans of New York City Commission should be funded by the City of New York for the duration of time deemed necessary by the Commission to hold hearings, conduct research and recommend compensation to the New African Descendant Community of New York City for the debt owed for the enslavement of their African ancestors during the colonial and post-colonial periods in New York City; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the Office of the Mayor of New York City to establish a Commission on Queen Mother Moore Reparations for Descendants of Africans of New York City.