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Res. No. 566

Resolution calling on Congress to pass, and the President to sign, H.R. 40, which establishes the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act.

By Council Members Williams, Stevens, Hudson, Louis, Riley, Restler, Ossé, Brooks-Powers, Marte, Hanif, Salaam, Avilés, Banks, Brewer, Cabán, Nurse, Rivera, Sanchez, De La Rosa, Krishnan and Narcisse

Whereas, Over the course of roughly 3 centuries, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade forced over 12 million Africans out of their homes and onto ships to be bought and sold as slaves in the Americas; and

Whereas, By the time the institution of slavery was abolished in 1860, nearly 89 percent of African Americans living in the United States were enslaved; and

Whereas, Though slavery has been outlawed for 164 years, it was the foundation for systemic racism and inequity that still affects many African Americans today; and

Whereas, On January 9. 2023, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee introduced H.R. 40 in the United States House of Representatives; and

Whereas, H.R. 40 establishes the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act (the Commission); and

Whereas, Reparation is defined as the making of amends for a wrong one has done, by paying money to or otherwise helping those who have been wronged; and

Whereas, The Commission established by H.R. 40 is tasked with the following responsibilities:

1) Compile documentary evidence of slavery in the U.S.;

2) Study the role of the federal and state governments in supporting the institution of slavery;

3) Analyze discriminatory laws and policies against freed African slaves and their

descendants;

4) Recommend ways the U.S. may recognize and remedy the effects of slavery and discrimination on African Americans, and including through a formal apology and compensation (i.e., reparations); and

Whereas, The Commission must consist of individuals from civil society and reparations organizations and individuals appointed by the President and congressional leadership; and

Whereas, Government employees, including members of Congress, may not serve on the Commission; and

Whereas, The Commission may hold hearings, subpoena witnesses and records, and contract with other entities to complete its aforementioned responsibilities; and

Whereas, The Commission could be vital for ongoing efforts to atone for the atrocities committed during slavery and to rectify the longstanding negative impacts the institution of slavery has had on the descendants of slaves; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon Congress to pass, and the President to sign, H.R. 40, which establishes the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act.

WD
9/3/2024
LS 17293