

HR 40: Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act

This bill establishes the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-Americans. The commission shall examine slavery and discrimination in the colonies and the United States from 1619 to the present and recommend appropriate remedies. Among other requirements, the commission shall identify (1) the role of the federal and state governments in supporting the institution of slavery, (2) forms of discrimination in the public and private sectors against freed slaves and their descendants, and (3) lingering negative effects of slavery on living African-Americans and society.

A Minute Proposed to NPYM Annual Session 2021

North Pacific Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends is an association of almost fifty local communities of Quakers in the states of Montana, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. We believe that discovering the whole truth about our historical inequities is not only beneficial but essential if we are to fully understand the past and present and move forward as a nation.

The legacy of slavery continues to define and shape life in America. In 1619 Africans were brought as slaves to the coast of Virginia and during the following 250 years approximately 4 million Africans and their descendants were systematically denied their rights, culture, language and ability to benefit from their own labor. Even after slavery ended, exploitation, brutality and unfair treatment continue in the form of Jim Crow laws, lynching, separate and unequal practices, unfair housing and home-loan policies, inequities in education and health care, mass incarceration and more. Many of these practices continue today. Generation after generation of Black Americans have been deprived of the opportunity to accumulate wealth due to governmental policies and laws, even as they contributed substantially and indispensably to the nation's prosperity.

North Pacific Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends supports HR 40, which is a resolution to establish a commission to examine slavery and discrimination in the colonies and the United States from 1619 to the present and recommend appropriate remedies. We believe that the establishment of this commission is a good first step in encouraging a national reckoning and determining appropriate remedies. This resolution has been introduced every year since 1989 and has never been adopted.

We fully support passage of HR 40 and encourage Friends throughout the United States to take all appropriate steps to encourage their Representatives and Senators to vote in favor of its adoption.