

SSFM Approved a Minute Supporting HR 40 in our February business meeting.

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.

THE APPROVED MINUTE: 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.

We support bill HR 40 which establishes 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 Bill has been introduced every year since 1989 and has yet to move forward for consideration.

We fully support passage of HR 40. We urge other monthly meetings as well as Pacific Northwest Quarterly Meeting and North Pacific Yearly Meeting to join with us in approving this minute and work on ways to support HR 40.