

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF

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SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD**

BEFORE THE

**HOUSE JUDICIARY SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE
CONSTITUTION, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND CIVIL LIBERTIES**

The Honorable Steve Cohen, Sub-Committee Chair

The Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee, Bill Sponsor

ON

H.R. 40

**THE COMMISSION TO STUDY AND DEVELOP REPARATION PROPOSALS
FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS ACT**

FEBRUARY 17, 2021

Thank you Representatives Cohen and Jackson Lee for this opportunity to submit written comments before this distinguished body to discuss the issue of reparations for the enslavement era and other forms of structural racial discrimination in the

United States, as part of this House Judiciary Subcommittee hearing on H.R. 40. Much of this testimony was submitted before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Organization of the American States, on September 24, 2019, with portions also based on my article, "Reparations – Has the Time Finally Come?" published by the American Civil Liberties Union, June 2019.

My name is Nkechi Taifa. I am a long-standing advocate of reparations, as an activist, scholar, and consultant. I am President and CEO of The Taifa Group, LLC whose mission is to advance justice. I am a founding member of the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA), established in 1987 as a mass-based coalition of organizations and individuals organized for the sole purpose of obtaining reparations for African descendants enslaved in the United States. I am the founding director of the Howard University School of Law's Equal Justice Program and am Senior Fellow at the Center for Justice at Columbia University. I convene the Justice Roundtable, a coalition of over 100 national organizations working on federal justice system reform and transformation.

I serve as an inaugural Commissioner on the National African American Reparations Commission (NAARC), a group of distinguished professionals in the fields of law, medicine, journalism, academics, history, civil rights and social justice advocacy, convened by the Institute of the Black World 21st Century. Finally, I am the co-author, along with Dr. Imari A. Obadele and Attorney Chokwe Lumumba, of the 1987 book, *Reparations Yes: The Legal and Political Reasons Why New Afrikans – Black People in North America – Should be Paid Now For the Enslavement of Our Ancestors*. This treatise, which pre-dated the introduction of HR40, examines the issue of reparations from a Black Nationalist independence framework, using the U.S. Constitution's 13th Amendment as basis for the claim.

In this testimony I will address the history and development of the reparations movement in the United States over the years and its impact today.

The concept and quest for reparations for the descendants of African people enslaved in the United States is not novel, nor is the demand for such compensation new. Although there have been hills and valleys in national attention to the issue, the demand for reparations has been continuous; there has been no substantial period of time where the call for redress has been neglected.

The first formal record of a petition for reparations in the United States was pursued and won by a formerly enslaved woman, Belinda Royall. Professor Ray Winbush's book, *Belinda's Petition*, describes an appeal she presented to the Massachusetts General Assembly in 1783, requesting a pension from the proceeds of her former enslaver's estate (an estate partly the product of her own uncompensated labor). Belinda's petition yielded a pension of fifteen pounds and twelve shillings.

Henrietta Wood was born into slavery in Kentucky, freed as an adult, and later kidnapped and sold back into slavery. Historian W. Caleb McDaniel in his book, *Sweet Taste of Liberty: A True Story of Slavery and Restitution*, describes how after the Civil War she sued her kidnapper for \$20,000 and was awarded \$2500, purportedly the largest verdict ever awarded for enslavement in the U.S. -- about \$65,000 in 2019 dollars.

On July 14, 1862 the Compensated Emancipation Act was passed which ended slavery in the District of Columbia. Notably, reparations were paid, not to the formerly enslaved, but payments were made to the former slaveholders, for loss of "property."

On February 18, 1866 the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate passed a bill providing for 40 acres of land as part of the Freedman's Bureau. It was vetoed by Lincoln's successor, President Andrew Johnson the following day, and Congress failed to muster the two-thirds majority needed to override the veto. Johnson likewise reversed and annulled proclamations such as General William Tecumseh

Sherman's January 16, 1865 Special Field Order No. 15, that sought to allot land to freed families in plots no larger than 40 acres.

Former U.S. Civil Rights Commissioner Mary Frances Berry illuminated the case of Callie House in her book, *My Face is Black is True*. Callie, along with Rev. Isaiah Dickerson, headed the first mass reparations movement in the United States, founded in 1898. The National Ex-Slave Mutual Relief Bounty and Pension Association had six hundred thousand dues-paying members seeking compensation for slavery from federal agencies.

During the 1920s Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association galvanized hundreds of thousands of Black people seeking repatriation with reparation, proclaiming, "Hand back to us our own civilization. Hand back to us that which you have robbed and exploited of us ... for the last 500 years."

During the 1950's and 60's Queen Mother Audley Moore, a former Garveyite, was perhaps the best known advocate for reparations. As president of the Universal Association of Ethiopian Women based in Harlem, New York, she presented a petition against genocide and for self-determination, land and reparations to the United Nations in both 1957 and 1959 and was active and inspirational in every major reparations movement until her death in 1996.

Reparations is a well-established principle of both international and domestic law that the United States government has supported and participated in. During WWI, an Allied Reparations Commission, supported by the United States, fixed the sum of reparations to be paid by the defeated Germany at 132 billion gold marks. Subsequently the U.S., acknowledging and deeply involved in the principle of reparations, achieved an alteration of reparations payment arrangements with the 1924 Dawes Plan, the 1928 Young Plan and Herbert Hoover's 1931 Moratorium.

During WWII, U.S. Presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman worked out the WWII reparations claims formula against Germany and Japan at the wartime Yalta and Potsdam conferences of Allied leaders in 1945. These conferences also assessed reparations against the smaller Axis powers, Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Italy and Rumania.

The U.S. has paid reparations to various indigenous nations and groups in this country for damages and frauds committed against them by the United States and the several states, up to 1946, through the Indian Claims Commission. Although such processes have been woefully inadequate, they nevertheless demonstrate U.S. recognition of the importance of at least a semblance of amends.

To date, the federal government has yet to offer even an apology to the descendants of Africans enslaved in the United States.

In his 1963 book, *Why We Can't Wait*, Dr. Martin Luther King proposed a "Bill of Rights for the Disadvantaged," which emphasized redress for both the historical victimization and exploitation of Blacks as well as their present-day degradation. "The ancient common law has always provided a remedy for the appropriation of labor on one human being by another. This law should be made to apply for the American Negro."

In 1966 the Black Panther Party's 10-point program graphically asserted that "this racist government has robbed us and now we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules ... promised 100 years ago as restitution for slave labor and mass murder of Black people."

In 1968 President Imari Obadele and the Republic of New Afrika in its Declaration of Independence proclaimed, "We claim no rights from the United States of America, other than those rights belonging to people anywhere in the world, and these

include the right to damages, reparations, due us for the grievous injuries sustained by ourselves and our ancestors by reason of United States' lawlessness."

In April 1969 the Black Manifesto was adopted at a National Black Economic Development Conference (NBEDC). in Detroit. The Manifesto, presented by civil rights activist James Forman, included a demand that white churches and synagogues pay \$500,000,000 in reparations to Blacks in the U.S. to help fund the establishment of a southern land bank, four television networks, four publishing and printing companies, a research center and a Black university. The following month Forman interrupted Sunday Service at the Riverside Church in New York to announce the reparations demand from the Black Manifesto. Several religious institutions responded with financial donations, and the FBI and Justice Department immediately began investigation and surveillance of the NBEDC.

In 1972 the National Black Political Assembly Convention meeting in Gary, Indiana adopted the Anti-Depression Program of the Republic of New Afrika, an act authorizing the payment of a sum of money in reparations for the enslavement era, and a negotiating commission between representatives of the United States government and representatives of the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika, to determine kind, dates and other details of paying reparations.

Consistently, the Nation of Islam's publications, *Muhammad Speaks* and later, *The Final Call*, have demanded that the United States exempt Black people "from all taxation as long as we are deprived of equal justice."

But it was towards the end of the 20th century that brought broad national attention to the call for reparations for people of African descent in the United States with the founding of the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA), on September 26, 1987. The call was initiated by Imari Obadele, later to be called the "Father of the Modern-Era Reparations Movement," for a gathering of reparations-loving people to convene in Washington to discuss, among other agenda

items, how to move the issue of reparations for Black people in the United States forward. Out of that historic gathering, the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America was formed, bringing diverse groups from the Republic of New Afrika to the National Conference of Black Lawyers under one umbrella.

Since the creation of N'COBRA, the demand for reparations in the United States substantially leaped forward, generating what I call, the "Modern-Era Reparations Movement." Organized on the heels of the passage and signing of the 1988 Civil Liberties Act, which granted reparations to Japanese-Americans for their unjust internment during World War II, N'COBRA reinvigorated the demand for reparations for Black people in the U.S. and broadened the concept through massive public education, accompanied by legislative and litigation initiatives.

Encouraged by the Civil Liberties Act, Congressman John Conyers (D-MI), introduced a bill in 1989 to "establish a commission to examine the institution of slavery and subsequent racial and economic discrimination against African Americans and the impact of these forces on Black people today." This commission would be charged, similar to the then recent success of the Japanese-Americans, with making recommendations to the Congress on appropriate remedies. The bill's number "HR40" was in remembrance of the unfulfilled 19th century promise to grant freed Blacks 40 acres and a mule. Congressman Conyers' "Commission to Study Reparations Proposals for African Americans Act" provided an official vehicle to have a public policy discussion on the issue of reparations in the Congress of the United States.

The 1988 Civil Liberties Act began with the 1980 establishment of a congressional commission to study the circumstances surrounding the rounding up and detention of Japanese Americans during WWII. That commission made recommendations to Congress on appropriate remedies, resulting in the payment of \$20,000 to each Japanese-American detention camp survivor; a trust fund to be used to educate Americans about the suffering of the Japanese-Americans during WWII; a formal

apology from the U.S. government, and a pardon for all those convicted of resisting detention camp internment.

It is a sad commentary that the United States government has yet to take formal responsibility for its role in the enslavement and post-slavery apartheid segregation of millions of Black people on its shores. It has never attempted reparation to African Americans for the extortion of labor for many generations; deprivation of their culture, freedom and human rights; and terrorism against them throughout the centuries. The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives did pass symbolic resolutions apologizing for slavery and segregation, which were never passed into law. Egregiously, the bill passed by the Senate contained a disclaimer that those seeking reparations or cash compensation could not use the apology to support a legal claim against the U.S.

In 2001 Randall Robinson, founder and president of TransAfrica, published *The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks*, a book that garnered publicity in the mainstream media. He expressed that whites can begin making reparations for slavery and the century of racial discrimination that followed with monetary restitution, educational programs, and the provision of equal opportunities to insure social and economic success.

Also in 2001, the World Conference Against Racism held in Durban, South Africa, formally proclaimed that slavery and the transatlantic slave trade are “crimes against humanity and should always have been so,” asserting that “the devastating damages of enslavement and systems of apartheid and de facto segregation spanned generations to negatively affect the collective well being of Africans in America to this very moment.” Unfortunately, the tragedy of 9-11 hit on the heels of the Durban Conference, resulting in an essential silencing of the fruits from that momentous pronouncement.

Regardless, the movement for reparations in the United States continued. In addition to N'COBRA and its predecessor thrusts, there were other groups either working with them, or independently, which consistently held up the banner for reparations. Included among them were the Black Reparations Commission under the leadership of Dorothy Lewis; the African National Reparations Organization under the auspices of the African People's Socialist Party; Roger Wareham and the December 12th Movement; the National Black United Front under the leadership of Dr. Conrad Worrill; Dr. Mustafa Ansari's Afro-Descendant Institute of Human Rights; Silas Muhammad's Lost Found Nation of Islam; the Black Radical Congress; Chokwe Lumumba and the New Afrikan Peoples Organization, the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement and the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, directed by Iva Carruthers, to name a few.

Although the issue of reparations for Black people in the United States was once, in the not too distant past, unthinkable by mainstream America as viable public policy, since the introduction of HR40, over the decades several state legislatures and scores of city councils across the country have passed reparations-type legislation or HR40 endorsement resolutions. In 1990, the Louisiana House of Representatives passed a resolution in support of reparations. In 1991 legislation was introduced into the Massachusetts Senate providing for the payment of reparations for slavery, the slave trade and individual discrimination against the people of African descent born or residing in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In 1994 the Florida Legislature paid \$150,000 to each of the eleven survivors of the 1923 Rosewood Race Massacre and created a scholarship fund for students of color. In 2001, the California State Assembly passed a resolution in support of reparations. After a four-year investigation, in 2001 the Tulsa Race Riot Reconciliation Act was enacted. State legislators settled on a scholarship fund and memorial to commemorate the June 1921 race slaughter that left as many as 300 Black people dead and 40 square blocks of exclusively Black businesses, home, and schools

obliterated. In 2001, a bill was introduced into the New York State Assembly, the “Commission to Quantify the Debt Owed to African Americans.”

Between 1990 and 2002, City Councils in the states of Arkansas, California, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, and the District of Columbia all passed resolutions in support of HR40.

Legal strategies to obtain reparations have been advanced. N’COBRA’s Litigation Strategies Commission under the leadership of Attorney Adjoa Aiyetoro, developed an approach to reparations litigation, which led to the identification and documentation of five injury areas suffered by African descendants in the U.S. during and after enslavement, including: Peoplehood/Nationhood, Education, Health, Criminal Punishment, and Wealth/Poverty. Unsuccessful litigation approaches included the Cato lawsuit initiated by the Lawyer’s Committee for Civil Rights Under Law; the Civil Liberties Act lawsuit initiated by the RNA’s Imari Obadele; the Tulsa lawsuit led by Charles Ogletree, Willie Gary and Johnny Cochran; and Deadria Farmer-Paellman’s efforts for redress from culpable corporations.

Farmer-Paellman and other reparations advocates challenged corporations who benefited from the profits made from the trafficking in human beings during the enslavement era. Countless companies and industries benefited and were enriched from the profits made as a result of chattel slavery. There are companies that sold life insurance policies on the lives of enslaved persons, such as Aetna, New York Life, and AIG, and financial gains were accrued by financial giants J.P. Morgan Chase, Manhattan Bank and Fleet Boston Financial Group. Others with documented ties to slavery included railroads Norfolk Southern, CSX, Union Pacific and Canadian National. Newspaper publishers such as Knight Rider, Tribune, E.W. Scripps, and Gannett assisted in the capture of runaway persons, and after enslavement, and newspapers frequently published prejudicial and inflammatory stories causing false information to spread like wildfire, intensifying white mob vehemence and violence.

The financial backers of many of the country's top universities were wealthy slave owners and it has been disclosed that the reason the prestigious Georgetown University stands today is because of the sale of Black people its benefactor, the Jesuits, owned. They are today in the process of reckoning with this sordid past, while grappling with approaches for reparative justice.

Although there has been much research and writing on the issue of reparations, it was journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates' seminal article in June 2014, "The Case for Reparations," published in the Atlantic Magazine, which reinvigorated the national discourse over the issue of reparations for African Americans, and catapulted the subject into mainstream society.

In 2015 the city of Chicago passed an ordinance granting cash payments, free college education and a range of social services to 57 living survivors of police torture. Explicitly defined as reparations totaling 5.5 million, the ordinance included a formal apology from the mayor and a mandate to teach the broader public about the torture through a memorial and public school curriculum.

In April 2015, the National African American Reparations Commission (NAARC) was formed, convened by the Institute of the Black World 21st Century under the leadership of Dr. Ron Daniels and dedicated to the memory of Queen Mother Audley Moore, dubbed as the "Mother of the Modern-Era Reparations Movement." NAARC is made up of distinguished professionals in the fields of law, medicine, journalism, academia, history, civil rights and social justice advocacy, many of whom have been long-standing in the reparations movement.

The National African American Reparations Commission was established to be an experienced body providing public education on a 10 point reparations program as a reference and framework for the national discourse on reparations; to support HR 40, the Congressional bill that would establish a Commission to study reparations

proposals for American Americans; and serve as an authoritative voice on the definition, principles and criteria for reparatory justice projects, proposals and initiatives for cities, states, corporations financial institutions, colleges and universities, and families.

The NAARC Commission has advanced a comprehensive, yet preliminary, reparations program to guide reparatory justice demands by people of African descent in the United States. A summary of its 10-point program includes:

1. A Formal Apology and establishment of a MAAFA/African Holocaust Institute
2. The Right to Repatriation and Creation of an African Knowledge Program
3. The Right to Land for Social and Economic Development
4. Funds for Cooperative Enterprises and Socially Responsible Entrepreneurial Development
5. Resources of the Health, Wellness and Healing of Black Families and Communities
6. Education for Community Development and Empowerment
7. Affordable Housing for Healthy Black Communities and Wealth Generation
8. Strengthening Black America's Information and Communication Infrastructure
9. Preserving Black Sacred Sites and Monuments
10. Repairing the Damages of the "Criminal Injustice System"

At the inaugural meeting of NAARC in April 2015, which included as a Commissioner, Kamm Howard, co-chair of NCOBRA, it was determined that much of what the original HR40 was designed to do (i.e. study the issue to determine if there were continued harms on current people of African descent in the United States from the crimes of enslavement and Jim Crow segregation), had already been done. NAARC thus concluded that HR40 must be revised to specifically address remedy. Congressman Conyers agreed, and on January 3, 2017 at the onset of the 115th Congress, introduced an updated bill, titled, the Commission to Study and Develop

Reparations Proposals for African Americans Act, again with the historic number HR40. The bill was taken up by Congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee upon the retirement of Representative Conyers, garnering the most number of co-sponsors in history. A Senate Companion bill was introduced by Senator Cory Booker, which now also encompasses the historic number S40.

In 2016, the Movement for Black Lives Policy Table released its platform, which prominently featured the issue of reparations. The U.S. Conference of Mayors has endorsed reparations. Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream endorses reparations, as well as influencers such as the Player's Coalition. Academics have written scholarly treatises, courses have been taught on the issue, and debates around reparations have picked up steam in the arena of social media.

Caskets are opening up across the country uncovering more and more evidences of historic racial atrocities, lynchings, and massacres with entire Black communities burned to the ground and decimated. Mere reparatory scaps were given to the descendants of the 1923 Rosewood and 1921 Tulsa slaughters. There are current efforts for redress from Ocoee, Florida's 1920 election day bloodbath and the 1919 terrorism that ravaged Elaine, Arkansas's Black community. Renewed litigation underway to achieve reparatory justice in Tulsa, Oklahoma is being thwarted. Not one of the recommendations from the 2000 Commission investigating the 1898 racial insurrection and coup d'état in Wilmington, North Carolina was passed by the legislature. Remnants from the slave ship Clotilda, which in 1860 illegally transported Africans to Mobile Bay, Alabama -- more than 50 years after the slave trade was abolished -- were discovered in 2019, and descendants today are seeking amends.

The above represents a mere microcosm of genocidal acts perpetrated by both private individuals and public officials against descendants of Africans enslaved in the United States, which has left in its aftermath Black people and once thriving

communities uprooted, terrorized, traumatized and scarred -- physically, mentally and economically -- generationally.

Numerous civil/human rights organizations, religious groups, professional organizations, civic groups, sororities, fraternities and labor unions, have officially endorsed the call for reparations. In addition to the legacy reparations groups N'COBRA and NAARC, over 200 organizations signed a letter supporting the passage of HR40, including the American Civil Liberties Union, Human Rights Watch, NAACP, National Council of Churches, Movement for Black Lives, Color of Change, Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Institute of the Black World 21st Century, United Methodist Church, Union of Reform Judaism, Samuel Dewitt Proctor Conference, National Association of Black Social Workers, and National Association of Black Veterans, to name a few.

In 2019 Virginia and Princeton Theological Seminaries made their mark. Virginia earmarked \$1.7 million to pay reparations to descendants who were enslaved to work on their campus and Princeton announced a \$27 million commitment for initiatives to recognize how it benefited from enslavement – the largest monetary commitment to date by an educational institution. Bishop Eugene Sutton has led the Episcopal Church in examining its role in enslavement, and the dioceses in several jurisdictions have committed monies as a moral statement of the church's historic complicity.

Spurred by N'COBRA's Ari Merretazon, slavery disclosure ordinances have been enacted in 16 jurisdictions to date, revealing historical ties to the enslavement era from financial institutions. And relatedly, 20 states including the District of Columbia have passed or are considering passing resolutions to declare racism a public health crisis.

In 2019 Evanston, Illinois authorized the use of tax revenue from the city's recreational cannabis industry to fund reparations initiatives in the community.

Evanston is a pioneer, being the first municipality to commit public dollars from its cannabis industry for such use. It commits \$10 million from its cannabis sales taxes over a ten-year period to seek to address the racial economic wealth gap between Blacks and Whites, by, initially, providing African American residents with housing assistance and economic development benefits.

After a thorough evaluation, NAARC certified Evanston's historic reparatory justice initiative as a replicable model for local initiatives throughout the country, particularly as jurisdictions seek creative ways to seek to repair the harms from the criminalization of marijuana.

Evanston is just one example. Within the past year the state of California passed a reparations bill, patterned off of the federal bill HR40. Reparations initiatives are pending in the states of New York and Maryland. The year 2020 also saw reparations initiatives to establish task forces or actual compensation in the cities of Chicago, Illinois; Asheville, North Carolina; Providence, Rhode Island; St. Paul, Minnesota; Amherst, Massachusetts; Burlington, Vermont, and Washington, DC.

A reparations bill passed the Virginia legislature in 2021 that targets five schools with ties to slavery, including the University of Virginia and the College of William and Mary, all of whom owe their foundational success to the forced labor of enslaved human beings who helped build and run the institutions in their early days.

Reparations is the act or process of repairing or restoring. It is payment for an injury; redress for a wrong done. International law has identified the following criteria for reparations: Restitution, Compensation, Rehabilitation, Satisfaction, and Guarantees of Non-Repetition. Supplementing these fundamentals the international community has recognized as critical to achieve reparatory justice, I also submit that in the specific context of Black people in the United States, the quest for reparations must encompass the following four elements:

- 1) the formal acknowledgment of historical wrong and an official, unfettered apology for the dehumanization and atrocities of the enslavement era and its legacies,
- 2). the recognition that the injury continued throughout the years including the Jim Crow/apartheid eras with injurious inequitable policies and practices that still manifest today, in the areas of economics, education, health, punishment, culture and lack of the right to self-determination,
- 3) the commitment to redress by all culpable parties, including the federal government, state and local governments, private and corporate entities, industries, and academic and religious institutions which enjoyed unjust enrichment, and
- 4) the actual compensation, in whatever form or forms are agreed upon.

The harms from the enslavement era and post-slavery degradation were multi-faceted, thus the remedy must be so as well. While cash payments/direct benefits are an important and necessary component of any claim for damages, a reparations settlement can be fashioned in as many ways as necessary to equitably address the countless manifestations of genocidal treatment sustained from chattel slavery and its continuing vestiges.

Some forms of community benefit redress for consideration could include land, housing, economic and community development, cessation of taxation, and the right to self-determination. Other amends may embrace repatriation resources, scholarships, truthful textbooks, and the erection of monuments and museums. Additional considerations could include commutations and pardons for impacted prisoners from the COINTELPRO era, and repairing the harms from the War on Drugs which was targeted to Black communities. The bottom line, however, is that reparations not be a substitute for ordinary public policy. The intent must specifically and sufficiently be tied to reparative measures that acknowledge and remedy identified injustices rooted in the historical continuum of the enslavement era through today.

Despite a resurfacing of white supremacy in the United States, there is optimism in the air. Today, the quest to have reparations seen as a legitimate concept for Black people in the United States is a reality. The issue has become more precise, less rhetorical, and has entered the mainstream. I am buoyed by the reemergence of the spirits of Belinda Royal, Callie House, Queen Mother Moore, Imari Obadele, Ronald Walters, Dorothy Lewis, Conrad Worrill, and the resilience of “Reparations Ray” Jenkins, who kept the fire alive in Congressman Conyers to introduce HR 40 year after year. And I am inspired by the words of the great anti-slavery orator Frederick Douglas, who poignantly instructed that “power concedes nothing without a demand.” The demand has continuously been made, and the time to seriously consider reparations for the descendants of Africans enslaved in the United States has finally come.

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