



February 16, 2021

Dear Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, Subcommittee Chairman Steve Cohen, and Chairman Jerrold Nadler,

The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC) has served as a leading voice of witness to the living Christ for 70 years. NCC is a diverse covenant community of 38 member denominations with more than 35 million individuals in 100,000 congregations from Protestant, Anglican, historic African-American, Orthodox, Evangelical, and Living Peace traditions. We have a common commitment to advocate and represent God's love and promise of unity in our public square. As part of our commitment to unity is our commitment to end racism and dismantle White Supremacy and the vestiges of slavery.

On April 4, 2018, the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination we launched the A.C.T. Now to End Racism. Focusing on the need to awaken and confront the realities of racism in our society it is our prayer and hope that individuals within our churches and society will be transformed and all will seek to transform the systems and structures that divide us.

We want to thank the House Judiciary Committee for holding a hearing on H.R. 40 "Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act". Dr. E. Tendayl Achiume, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism noted in her report on reparation issues on August 19, 2019:

"The transatlantic slave trade has been described as the first system of globalization. At the core of transatlantic slavery and the slave trade was the dehumanization of persons on the basis of race"; a social construct that to this day shapes access to fundamental human rights. Slavery and the slave trade embodied and entrenched extreme forms of racial discrimination, relying on domestic and international legal frameworks to institute and protect racial hierarchy in the various parts of the world affected by transatlantic slavery."

Every aspect of daily life in the United States is impacted by racial discrimination: housing, education, the criminal legal system, healthcare, etc. For too long we have accepted these disparities as normal or blamed those impacted. This hearing and the ultimate passing of HR 40 is a first step to American beginning to live up to its dreamed promise of all people having a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness envisioned by the founding fathers.

Healing and unity must begin with the work that the HR 40 Commission will accomplish by providing a record of these disparities and proposals for repairing the breach that is inherent in our country.

We pray and wish you well in this endeavor and the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA is available and willing to work with you as you move forward.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Justice and Peace
National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA