



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

1620 EYE STREET, NORTHWEST
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006
TELEPHONE (202) 293-7330
FAX (202) 293-2352
TDD (202) 293-9445
URL: www.usmayors.org/uscm

April 13, 2021

Jerrold Nadler
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Sheila Jackson Lee
Chair
Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Nadler and Chair Jackson Lee,

We write to you on behalf of the nation's mayors to register our strong support for H.R. 40, the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act. Last summer the U.S. Conference of Mayors adopted policy in support of the Commission and called for quick passage of this bill. The hearing the Committee held in February and the markup scheduled for April 14 are historic and critical steps in achieving this. We urge all members of the Judiciary Committee to vote for H.R. 40 so that it can move quickly to the House floor.

This is long-overdue legislation that will contribute greatly to our efforts to dismantle systemic racism and move toward greater racial equality and justice in our country. Despite the fact that slavery ended more than 150 years ago, many Black Americans still have not yet been able to realize the freedoms, justice, and rights they are promised by the Constitution. Today many still contend with and suffer from resulting racial disparities in outcomes related to wealth, income, employment, education, housing, health, criminal justice, and environmental justice.

This Commission would study and consider a national apology and proposal for reparations for the institution of slavery, its subsequent de jure and de facto racial and economic discrimination against Black Americans, and the impact of these forces on living Black Americans. It would examine the role of the federal and state governments in supporting the institution of slavery as well as other public and private forms of discrimination against freed slaves and their descendants through the present day. It would develop a report and provide recommendations to the Congress outlining appropriate remedies, including any reparations or special measures, and examine current federal laws and policies that continue to disproportionately and negatively affect Black Americans as a group and determine how those policies and laws can be eliminated or reformed to reverse those injuries.

This is important work, and it needs to start now. The U.S. Conference of Mayors thanks you for your leadership on this issue and stands ready to work with you to see H.R. 40 enacted into law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Fischer".

Greg Fischer
Mayor of Louisville
President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Cochran".

Tom Cochran
CEO and Executive Director

cc. Members, Committee on the Judiciary