

Dear Representatives on the House Ways and Means Committee:

We submit the documents linked below to the House Ways and Means Committee to support the House moving to adopt legislation to establish comprehensive reparations for black American descendants of US slavery. We emphasize throughout the materials we are sharing that the case for black reparations is not exclusively for slavery but for the cumulative trajectory of three phases of racial injustice in the United States on living African Americans. Those three phases necessarily include slavery but also must include the nearly century long period of legal segregation and white terrorism (the Jim Crow period) and atrocities that have succeeded the passage of Civil Rights legislation in the mid-1960s: mass incarceration, police execution of unarmed blacks, continuing discrimination in access to housing, credit, and employment, and the immense disparity in wealth between blacks and whites.

The latter should be the target of a reparations project; a central goal of a reparations project must be elimination of the racial wealth gap. This will entail raising black assets to a level sufficient to move the black share of the nation's pre-tax wealth, currently less than 3 percent, to a level commensurate with the black share of the nation's population, approximately 13 percent. We estimate, based upon 2016 data from the Survey of Consumer Finances, this would require a national expenditure of at least \$10 to \$12 trillion that should erase the wealth gap within ten years of the onset of the project.

We provide links to five documents here that we would like to have included in the record of the Committee's proceedings:

<https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/how-reparations-american-descendants-slavery-could-narrow-racial-wealth-divide-ncna1019691>

<https://rooseveltinstitute.org/true-reparations-are-a-national-debt/>

<https://www.inquirer.com/opinion/commentary/coronavirus-black-americans-racial-disparities-reparations-20200420.html>

<https://www.newsweek.com/coronavirus-making-case-black-reparations-clearer-ever-opinion-1501887>

<https://www.thecrismagazine.com/single-post/2019/09/09/The-Case-For-Reparations>

The first two items are articles we have written detailing the motivation for and the broad structure of a reparations program. Far more detail is provided in the final chapter of our new book *From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the Twenty-First Century* (University of North Carolina Press 2020). The third and fourth items are opinion pieces we wrote indicating why African American reparations must be a priority in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis. *In general, we argue that elimination of racial health disparities will necessitate elimination of racial wealth disparities.*

The final item is William Darity Jr.'s written testimony for the House Judiciary Committee hearings held on June 19, 2019 on HR40 to establish a study commission on African American reparations. We believe that such a study commission is essential as a prelude to the design of an African American reparations project—similar to the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians that preceded reparations for Japanese Americans unjustly incarcerated during World War II. However, the bill as it

stands has been largely unchanged since it was first introduced more than 30 years ago despite subsequent developments. Darity's testimony recommends several important revisions that need to be made in the bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely, William Darity Jr. and A. Kirsten Mullen