

20 April 2021

Resolution to Renew Support for H.R.40, the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act, and the Broader Efforts to achieve Reparations for Slavery

WHEREAS the 117th Congress reintroduced H.R.40, the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act, in a three-hour hearing on February 17th, 2021, and the proposed legislation cleared a House committee on April 15th, 2021, and is now making its way to the full House;

Whereas, the PSC DA passed a resolution on May 27, 2004 in support of H.R.40;

Whereas this bill was first proposed in 1989 by John Conyers, subsequently reintroduced in every legislative session and currently has as its lead sponsor, Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D., Texas);

Whereas this bill's purpose is to establish a commission to "study and develop" proposals for slavery reparations; it is the sole legislation currently under consideration that might lead to an implementation of reparations;

Whereas while efforts to repair other historical wrongs in U.S. history have seen some success, endeavors to repair the injuriousness of slavery, disproportionately impacting African Americans, have gone unheeded;

Whereas [a 2016 United Nations panel](#) stipulates that the U.S. has not "confronted its legacy of 'racial terrorism,'" linking "past injustices to recent police killings of black men" and concluding that the U.S. "owes African-Americans reparations for slavery";

Whereas—time is of the essence – as Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee reminds America: "We can't wait;" given how rarely reparations has officially been "on the table" in U.S. history, this is the moment when a mass of Americans might support it;

Whereas, H.R.40 as reported by ABC News reports has "the support of 170 members of Congress and 300 organizations, including the U.S. Conference of Mayors, NAACP and ACLU."

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PSC CUNY add its name to those names by reiterating and renewing the union's unqualified support of the bill, and that it maintain said support for as long as may be necessary until H.R. 40 is passed;

Be it resolved that, given the fact that the PSC supported the bill originally, it reaffirm that support now, over twenty years on, while also urging the AFT to do the same;

Be it resolved that the PSC work to educate its members about these issues and H.R. 40 in order to involve as many members as possible in an effective lobbying effort in support of the bill.

Be it resolved, given that H.R. 40 calls only for a study (and not reparations itself) and since chattel slavery was a pivotal form of labor abuse in U.S. history and that it played a critical role in the nation's economic growth, the PSC, as a labor union, declare itself ethically and morally bound to support slavery reparations as an ongoing commitment.

Be it resolved, finally, therefore that the membership of the PSC CUNY take action through the work of the Anti-Racism Committee, and by other means, and work in solidarity with organizations such as N'COBRA, the Movement for Black Lives, or others involved in the fight for reparations.

Respectfully submitted: Maureen Fadem, Stuart Kaufer, Dr. D.P. Banks, Ruth Wangerin, Cecelia McCall, Anthony Gronowicz, and Howard Meltzer.