

***Why We Can't Wait* Coalition Statement Urges Immediate Congressional Actions on H.R. 40/S.40, the Federal Slavery Reparations Bill**

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s seminal text, "Why We Can't Wait," was written in 1963 and has emerged as more prescient than ever in this moment. The multi-racial, cross-generational protests across the United States have ushered in a national reckoning on structural racism—and a sea change in attitudes. A [majority of people in the US support the protests](#) and believe that [racism is a serious issue](#) in this country. **We, the undersigned organizations, believe addressing it can no longer wait.**

People in the US are now more eager than ever to pull back the curtain on institutions to see whether they have helped to advance or stall racial progress, and the US Congress is no exception. One bill in particular can demonstrate support for meeting this moment in a reasonable, rational, and compassionate way: [House Resolution \(HR\) 40](#). We urge House and Committee leadership to bring this bill to a full vote once it reaches the floor.

The current social movement, the largest in US history, is in response to problems that are centuries in the making—issues intractably tied to the horrors of settler colonialism and the enslavement of Black people in the United States. People in the US are increasingly aware that there is no way forward from the current strife without addressing one of the nation's most egregious violations of human rights—the institution of slavery. HR 40 would establish a commission to investigate the legacy of slavery and its ongoing harms as well as come up with proposals to Congress for redress and repair.

HR 40 is simply a first and reasonable step—it is a commitment to truth-telling, studying and coming up with ideas to treat the disease, rather than a commitment to the treatment itself. The bill has been introduced for 30 years—yet for 30 years, it has languished. If the protests have demonstrated anything, **it is that action cannot wait.**

- HR 40 can't wait, when Covid-19 [is harming Black people in the US](#) at three times the rate of white people, with disparities across all age groups and areas of the country.
- HR 40 can't wait, when [Black infants are more than twice as likely to die](#) as white infants—making the disparity worse than it was in 1850, when Black people were enslaved.
- HR 40 can't wait, when heads of white households who only have a high school diploma are sitting on [almost 10 times more wealth](#) than Black households with the same level of education. If Black families did "everything right," the advanced degrees would still allow them to accumulate less wealth than a white family whose head of household only had a high school diploma. They'd be disproportionately [denied mortgages and fair lending rates](#) regardless of their incomes.
- HR 40 can't wait, when the [gap between Black and white wealth](#) is as large as it was in 1968.
- HR 40 can't wait, when school districts that serve higher populations of Black and brown students [receive \\$23 billion less in funding](#) compared to mostly white school districts, even though they serve the same number of children.

- HR 40 can't wait, when [Black students are disproportionately punished and criminalized in their schools](#), beginning in preschool, facing greater rates of suspension, expulsion, and arrest compared to their white peers, often for the same behaviors.
- HR 40 can't wait, when experts say that systemic racism is leaving Black people with [symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder](#), [harm to their immune systems](#), [premature aging](#), and in Washington, DC, life expectancies that are a staggering [14.9 years shorter](#) than white residents'—all while Black people are less likely than white people to have access to mental health services and more likely to receive poor quality care.
- HR 40 can't wait, when the suicide rate [for Black children is rising faster](#) than for any other racial and ethnic group, and the second-leading cause of death for Black youth aged 10 to 19.
- Don't ask us to wait, when governments' [infrastructure plans](#) have racially segregated cities across the country, creating separate conditions of life for Black and white people through “urban removal,” highway construction, restrictive zoning laws, and use of eminent domain.
- Don't ask us to wait, when as a result of government-imposed segregation, health outcomes in Black neighborhoods are disproportionately impacted by [heat levels](#) and [environmental hazards](#) due to the close proximity to places like oil refineries, trash incinerators, construction sites, and waste dumping sites.
- Don't ask us to wait, when even after the broken promise of “[40 acres and a mule](#),” formerly enslaved Black people and their descendants managed to own 14 million acres of land at the start of the 20th century, while today [at least 90 percent](#) of that land is not in their possession, due to systemic oppression, targeted racist violence, and an inequitable legal system.
- Don't ask us to wait when the property tax system has [discriminated against Black families](#) throughout history and across the country, saddling them with an unfair tax burden – and when to this day, Black people pay 13 percent more in property taxes than similarly situated white families.
- Don't ask us to wait, when even dying costs Black people more — end-of-life care under Medicare is [\\$7,100 more expensive](#) for Black individuals compared to their white counterparts.
- Don't ask us to wait, when Black people are more than six times as likely as white people to languish behind bars for possessing drugs for personal use, even though Black and white people use drugs at the [same rates](#).
- Don't ask us to wait, when [1 in 1,000 Black men and boys in the United States](#) can expect to die at the hands of police in a country where it's rare for police officers to face legal consequences — and [even rarer to face a conviction](#) — for killing Black people.
- Don't ask us to wait, when [Black women in the United States](#) are three times more likely to die of preventable pregnancy related causes than white women, and are nearly twice as likely to die from cervical cancer.

As Dr. King argued in 1963, the movement for racial equality and equal rights under the law calls on us to move courageously towards repair. We can't get back those years and wages that Black people lost while in bondage and unfairly behind bars. We can't recover the lives lost to systemic anti-Blackness and heinous racial terror. We can't undo the trauma that has wreaked havoc on Black communities and bodies. **But what we can do is pass HR 40, and its Senate**

companion S 40 (formerly S 1083). It is what the moment requires. It is an opportunity to start moving the United States out of this deep quagmire of inequality and to finally make it whole.

Sincerely,

1863 Ventures
1Hood Media
4S Bay Partners
ACR Capital, LLC
ADDY PRODUCTIONS LLC
Adrian Dominican Sisters
African Ancestral Society
Alabama New South Coalition
Alabama Save OurSelves Movement for Justice and Democracy
Alchemy Space
Alianza Nacional de Campesinas
All Healers Mental Health Alliance
Allard K. Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic, Yale Law School
AME Zion Church
American Baptist Churches, USA
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
American Friends Service Committee
American Humanist Association
Amherst Mindfulness
Amnesty International USA
Amplify Action
Appeal Incorporated
Arise For Social Justice
Arizona Coalition for Change
Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC)
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Athlete Ally
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
AveryEden, LLC
Bayard Rustin Liberation Initiative
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
Big&Chewy, LLC
Black Administrators in Child Welfare (BACW)
Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI)
Black and Pink
Black and Pink, Boston
Black Economic Council of Massachusetts (BECMA)

Black Mental Health Task Force
Black Millennials 4 Flint
Black Millennial Political Convention
Black Music Action Coalition (BMAC)
Blacks in Law Enforcement
blank space
Bleeker
Board of Aldermen City of New Bern, NC
Bon Secours Associates
Boston Workers Circle
Braxton Institute
Bread of the World
Breakout
BreAtheWithMe Revolution
Bridge4Unity Anti-racist Group
Brighter View Foundation
Broken Crayons still color
Bronze Investments, LLC
California Alliance for Youth and Community Justice
Center for Community Alternatives
Center for Disability Rights
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
Center for Hunger-Free Communities
Center for LGBTQ Economic Advancement & Research
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Centro Legal de La Raza
Change The Ref
Chinese-American Planning Council
Chi-Town Impact
Council of Jewish Women
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Defense Fund - California
Children's Defense Fund - Minnesota
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Church World Service
City of Durham, NC
City of Yonkers, NY
Collaborating Voices Foundation
College and Community Fellowship
Color of Change
Columbia Law School Human Rights Institute
Coming To The Table

Community Healing Network, Inc.
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Connecticut General Assembly
Creation Justice Ministries
Criminal Justice Policy Coalition, Boston, Massachusetts
Dance/NYC
Demand Progress
Democrats Abroad Reparations Task Force
Densho: The Japanese American Legacy Project
Disability Rights California
Disciples Center for Public Witness (Disciples of Christ)
Discovering U
Dominican Cultural Association of Yonkers
Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids
Dream Catcher Initiative Inc.
Drug Policy Alliance
Dynamic Force Productions, LLC
East Bay Community Law Center
Ebenezer Church, Phoenix, AZ
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)
Evelution INC
Equality North Carolina
Exploring Whiteness: Unlearning Racism and Understanding Privilege
Faith Action Network - Washington State
Faith 4 Justice Asheville
Faith For Black Lives
Faith In Action Bay Area
Faith in Indiana
Faith in Florida
Faith in Action LA RED
Faith in New Jersey
Faith in Public Life
fig nine
First Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Fit, Fyne & Fabulous, LLC
Fred T. Korematsu Institute
Fund For Reparations NOW!
FUSD Racial Justice Project
FUSD Reparations Group
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Giving Blueprint
Global Human Rights Clinic at the University of Chicago Law School (for affiliation purposes)

GLSEN

Granite State Organizing Project

Hagans-Jones Consulting LLC

Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights

HBCUNomics, LLC

HBCU Pride Nation

HBCU STEAM, LLC

HBCU Wall Street

HealMobile Ministry

Health in Justice Action Lab, Northeastern University School of Law

Heart to Heart Coalition

Henrose Cares, Inc

HERitage Giving Fund

Historic Vernon AME Church

Holland & Sherry

Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC

Human Rights Watch

I Love Black People

IKAR Jewish Community

Immigrant Legal Defense

Impact Youth Services

Institute of the Black World (IBW) 21st Century

International Black Women's Congress

International Center for Transitional Justice

Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)

Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), Dayton Chapter

Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), Sacramento Chapter

Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), Seattle Chapter

Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), Twin Cities Chapter

Japanese American National Museum

Johnson & Klein Law

Justice Roundtable

Justice Strategies

justis connection

Keep The Change, LLC

Klassy Gyrlz Empire SP&C

Lake Street Church of Evanston

Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

League of Conservation Voters

Legal Action Center

Let's ReUp

LGBT Center of Raleigh

LGBTQ Allyship
Life Line Financial Group
Los Angeles Black/Jewish Justice Alliance
makeitplain.com
Matthew Shepard Foundation
McPherson Strategies, LLC
Merakai
Messiah Baptist Church
Minnesota Council of Churches
Missouri Faith Voices
MomsRising
Morgan State University
Movement for Black Lives
Murph-Emmanuel AME Church
My Community Too PAC
Nathalie Molina Niño, LLC (O³)
National Action Network (NAN)
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE)
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
NAACP Yonkers Branch #2188
National African American Reparations Commission (NAARC)
National Asian Pacific American Bar Association
National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse (NAPAFASA)
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
National Association for Black Veterans, Inc.
National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW)
National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice
National Birth Equity Collaborative
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA)
National Conference of Black Lawyers (NCBL)
National Consumers League
National Council for Black Studies (NCBS)
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)
National Council of Churches
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of Negro Women, Inc. - Hudson Valley Section
National Equality Action Team (NEAT)
National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA)
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Health Law Program

National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild (NIPNLG)
National Lawyers Guild (NLG)
National Lawyers Guild - International Committee
National LGBT Bar Association
National LGBT Cancer Network
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
National Partnership for New Americans
National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA)
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
National Stop the Violence Alliance. Inc.
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New American Leaders
New York Day of Remembrance Committee
New Yorkers for Culture & Arts
Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress
Nikkei Progressives (Los Angeles)
North Carolina Council of Churches
North Forest Bulldogs Youth Sports
Northminster Presbyterian Church, Evanston, Illinois
Not in Our Town Princeton
OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates
One World Exchange
Project Blueprint
Operation Restoration
Optional Outreach
Orange County Congregation Community Organization
Orthodox Church in America
Our Voice Our Vote AZ
OutNebraska
Pacific Community Ventures
Peace Builders of Orange County
Pillows to Pads
Pivot Sac
Positive Women's Network-USA
Poo-Pourri
Powerful Community Church in Wichita, Kansas
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Primera Impact
Progressives Educating New Yorkers
ProJect Access To AFreeKa
Pure Heart Worship Center
Racial Justice NOW

Racial Justice Rising (Massachusetts)
Radical Health
Raleigh Immigration Law Firm
Ramirez & Sunnerberg
Rare and Black
RaVae Entertainment, Inc.
Red-Horse Financial Group, Inc.
Religious of Jesus and Mary, USA-Haiti Province
Reparations4slavery.com
Reparations for Amherst, MA
Reparations Pledge
RESULTS
Rise Up Kingston
Rosalyn Cares Foundation
Safer Foundation
Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference
San Jose Nikkei Resisters
School Sisters of Notre Dame, Central Pacific Province
ScienceVest
Shining Stars Leadership Academy
Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ)
Showing Up for Racial Justice - Atlanta
Showing Up for Racial Justice - Biddeford-Saco
Showing Up for Racial Justice - Blount County, TN
Showing Up for Racial Justice - Buffalo
Showing Up for Racial Justice - Corvallis, Oregon
Showing Up for Racial Justice - Marin
Showing Up for Racial Justice - Northern New Mexico
Showing Up for Racial Justice – Rochester
Showing Up for Racial Justice - San Francisco
Showing Up For Racial Justice - Southwest Washington
Showing Up For Racial Justice - Springfield-Eugene
Showing Up for Racial Justice - Vashon-Maury
Showing Up for Racial Justice - Westchester
Showing Up for Racial Justice - Western Massachusetts
Shtibl Minyan
SimonSays Entertainment, Inc.
Sisters of Bon Secours, USA
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team and Office of Anti-Racism & Racial Equity
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, USA
Sisters of the Presentation, Dubuque, Iowa

Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny
Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, Province of the United States and Canada
Sixth Episcopal District African Methodist Episcopal Church
Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA)
Society of the Sacred Heart United States Canada Province
South Carolina Christian Action Council, Inc.
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Southern Poverty Law Center Action Fund
Sowers of Justice Network
St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church
St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church, San Jose, California
Stetson University College of Law
Strive Till I Rise
Strong Asian Lead
Students for Sensible Drug Policy
Sunrise Movement
Taranga House Retreat & Spiritual Practice Center
Terence Crutcher Foundation
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
The Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations
The Association of Black Psychologists, Inc.
The Bridge Crossing Jubilee
The Taifa Group, LLC
The Chocolate Factory
The Husseini Group, Inc.
The Institute for Democratic Education and Culture/SpeakOut
The Josa Group LLC
The Mezzanine Fund
The Prinz Law Firm, P.C.
The Reparations Project
The United Church of Christ
The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society
Think Rubix Woke Vote
Third Avenue Business Improvement District
Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center
TRANScending Barriers
Tsuru for Solidarity
Tule Lake Committee
Tyler Household Girl Chat 3.0
Umbrelly Welly
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Church in Denver

Universal Negro Improvement Association-African Communities League Rehabilitating
Committee Government
University Network for Human Rights
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
Ureka, Inc.
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
USC Gould School of Law International Human Rights Clinic
Vision Walkers
Vote Run Lead
#WeAllGrow Latina Network
WESPAC Foundation, Inc.
White People 4 Black Lives
Whitman-Walker Institute
WOCstar Fund
Women's Law Project
Woodhull Freedom Foundation
World Within Labs
Yard Talk 101
Yoga Center Amherst
YOUnify
Zehner, LLC

This statement was originally sent as a letter to US Congressional leadership on July 30, 2020. Since that time the H.R. 40 Coalition has been accepting signatories to this statement on a rolling basis.