

SENATE BILL 587

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CF HB 1422

By: ~~Senator Muse~~ **Senators Muse, Augustine, Brooks, and M. Washington**

Introduced and read first time: January 23, 2025

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: February 26, 2025

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **State Government – Maryland Reparations Commission**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Maryland Reparations Commission to study and make
4 recommendations relating to appropriate benefits to be offered to individuals whose
5 ancestors were enslaved in the State or were impacted by certain inequitable
6 government policies; and generally relating to the Maryland Reparations
7 Commission.

8 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
9 That:

10 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

11 (2) “Commission” means the Maryland Reparations Commission.

12 (3) “Individuals impacted by historical inequality” means:

13 (i) individuals having origins in any of the Black racial groups of
14 Africa; and

15 (ii) individuals whose ancestors were:

16 1. enslaved in the State; or

17 2. impacted by inequitable government policies.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



(4) “Inequitable government policies” means federal, State, or local government policies during the periods commonly known as the post–Reconstruction era and the Jim Crow era, 1877 through 1965, that have led to economic disparities based on race, including housing segregation and discrimination, redlining, restrictive covenants, and tax policies.

(b) There is a Maryland Reparations Commission.

(c) The Commission consists of:

(1) two members of the Senate of Maryland, one of whom is a member of the Legislative Black Caucus, appointed by the President of the Senate;

(2) two members of the House of Delegates, one of whom is a member of the Legislative Black Caucus, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

(3) the Comptroller, or the Comptroller’s designee;

(4) the State Treasurer, or the Treasurer’s designee;

(5) the State Archivist, or the State Archivist’s designee;

(6) one member of the Maryland Center for History and Culture, designated by the President of the Maryland Center for History and Culture;

(7) one member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, designated by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Maryland State Conference President;

(8) two employees of historically Black colleges and universities in the State who have expertise in the history of slavery, one of whom represents a private college or university and one of whom represents a public college or university, designated by the Maryland Legislative Black Caucus;

(9) a representative of the Maryland Black Chamber of Commerce, designated by the President of the Maryland Black Chamber of Commerce;

(10) a representative of the Baltimore Chapter of the National Association of Real Estate Brokers, designated by the Local Board President;

(11) a representative for the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, designated by the President of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History;

(12) a representative of the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, designated by the Chair of the Commission; and

(13) the following members appointed by the Governor:

(i) a mental health expert;

(ii) two historians, with expertise in researching the impacts of enslavement and housing segregation;

(iii) a representative of a religious institution that serves a community with a high minority population;

(iv) an attorney with expertise in civil rights law or constitutional law;

(v) a representative of an African American financial institution; and

(vi) two members of the general public.

(d) The Commission shall select from among its members a chair and a vice chair.

(e) A member of the Commission:

(1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Commission; but

(2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

(f) The State Archives and the public college or university represented under subsection (c)(8) of this section shall jointly provide staff for the Commission.

(g) (1) The Commission shall:

(i) study and make recommendations relating to appropriate benefits to be offered to individuals impacted by historical inequality;

(ii) on or before January 1, 2027, submit a preliminary report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly; and

(iii) on or before November 1, 2027, submit a final report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

(2) In conducting the study required under paragraph (1) of this subsection, the Commission shall examine:

(i) reparations payments made and benefits offered in the United States by the federal government, states, cities, religious institutions, and colleges and universities;

(ii) types of benefits appropriate for reparations, including official statements of apology, monetary compensation, property tax rebates, social service assistance, licensing and permit fee waivers and reimbursement, down payment assistance for the purchase of residential real property, business incentives, child care, debt forgiveness, and higher education tuition payment waivers and reimbursement;

(iii) the history of slavery in Maryland and the number of individuals whose ancestors were enslaved in the State;

(iv) inequitable government policies, the size of the impacted populations, and how public and private institutions benefited from these policies; and

(v) any other topic deemed appropriate by the Commission.

(3) Recommendations made by the Commission under paragraph (1) of this subsection shall include:

(i) common procedures for evaluating evidence of the lineage of potential recipients;

(ii) information necessary to be included in any application to verify lineage and receive reparations;

(iii) eligibility requirements for applicants, if any, including appropriate methods of demonstrating eligibility;

(iv) a process for approving applications for benefits;

(v) an estimate of the costs associated with awarding any type of reparations recommended by the Commission; and

(vi) if monetary compensation is a type of reparation recommended by the Commission:

1. the amount of monetary compensation recommended and method of calculating the amount, including, as appropriate:

A. the length and conditions of the enslavement of the individual or individuals from whom the applicant is descended; or

B. the level and impact of the economic disparity suffered;

2. potential sources of funding, including fees paid by private businesses and organizations in the State that have benefited from the institution of slavery or inequitable government policies;

3. the feasibility of creating and administering a reparations fund; and

4. appropriate methods for distributing the recommended compensation, including the use of fiscal agents, business incubators, community development corporations, credit unions, or other community institutions.

(h) (1) The Commission may seek the assistance of State agencies in conducting the study or making recommendations under this section.

(2) To the extent authorized by law, State agencies shall assist the Commission in a request made under this subsection.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2025. It shall remain effective for a period of 3 years and, at the end of June 30, 2028, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

Approved:

Governor.

President of the Senate.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.