

March 10, 2020

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
6 Bladen Street, Room 206
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Support - House Bill 1201 - "Harriet Tubman Community Investment Act."

Dear Chairwoman Pendergrass:

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 1201, the "Harriet Tubman Community Investment Act."

Slavery in America dates back four hundred years when, in 1619, African people were robbed of their families, homes, and livelihoods and forcibly brought to the "New World." After centuries of human trafficking and legalized bondage, the institution of slavery was outlawed in the United States with the culmination of the Civil War.

Nevertheless, in the years that followed, the legacy of slavery persisted through the Jim Crow laws and the "separate but equal" policies that codified segregation and racism. Inequity and inequality remain fundamental issues today; the United States sees the disproportionate mass incarceration of people of color and recent studies show that the average black family earns a median income that is 59.5 percent that of a white household. It is clear that to this day the consequences of slavery and racial segregation continue to reverberate, fueling society's systemic discrimination and racism.

Making amends to those who endured the inhumanity of slavery and to their descendants who have been impacted by the residual effects of slavery has been debated since the Civil War. I am a co-sponsor of H.R. 40 in the 116th Congress, the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act, which would establish a commission charged with examining the impact of slavery and the discrimination of African-Americans from 1619 to today. House Bill 1201 will similarly provide for a commission charged with developing and implementing a process for providing reparations to the descendants of individuals who were enslaved within the State of Maryland. This bill will provide a path forward for Marylanders to create partnerships, seek justice, and heal these historic wounds.

I respectfully request favorable consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,



Anthony G. Brown

CC: The Honorable Wanika Fisher, Members of the House Government Operations Committee