

By: **Senator Gladden**

Introduced and read first time: January 31, 2003

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **African-American Reparation Task Force**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing an African-American Reparation Task Force;  
4 providing for the membership of the Task Force; providing for the designation of  
5 the Chairman of the Task Force; providing for staff for the Task Force;  
6 specifying the duties of the Task Force; requiring the Task Force to report to the  
7 Governor and the General Assembly on or before a certain date; providing for  
8 the termination of this Act; and generally relating to the creation of an  
9 African-American Reparation Task Force.

10 Preamble

11 WHEREAS, Approximately 4,000,000 Africans and their descendants were  
12 enslaved in the United States and the colonies that became the United States from  
13 1619 to 1865; and

14 WHEREAS, The institution of slavery was constitutionally and statutorily  
15 sanctioned by the government of the United States from 1789 through 1865; and

16 WHEREAS, The slavery that flourished in the United States constituted an  
17 immoral and inhumane deprivation of Africans' life, liberty, African citizenship rights,  
18 and cultural heritage and denied them the fruits of their own labor; and

19 WHEREAS, Sufficient inquiry has not been made into the effects of the  
20 institution of slavery on living African-Americans and society in the United States;  
21 now, therefore,

22 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
23 MARYLAND, That:

24 (a) There is an African-American Reparation Task Force.

25 (b) The Task Force consists of the following members:

26 (1) One member of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of  
27 the House;

1           (2)     One member of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President  
2 of the Senate; and

3           (3)     The following members appointed by the Governor:

- 4           (i)     A representative from Bowie State University;
- 5           (ii)    A representative from Coppin State University;
- 6           (iii)   A representative from Morgan State University;
- 7           (iv)    A representative from University of Maryland Eastern Shore;
- 8           (v)     A representative from the Maryland Legislative Black Caucus;
- 9           (vi)    A professor of African-American Studies at an institution of  
10 higher education, as that term is defined in § 10-201 of the Education Article, located  
11 in Maryland;
- 12          (vii)   An economist; and
- 13          (viii)  Three members of the public.

14       (c)     To the greatest extent possible, the Governor shall attempt to ensure  
15 regional diversity on the Task Force.

16       (d)     The Governor shall designate the Chairman of the Task Force from among  
17 the members of the Task Force.

18       (e)     The Department of Legislative Services shall provide staff for the Task  
19 Force.

20       (f)     The Task Force shall:

21           (1)     Examine the institution of slavery that existed from 1619 through  
22 1865 in the United States and the colonies that became the United States, including  
23 examination of the following:

- 24           (i)     The capture and procurement of Africans;
- 25           (ii)    The transport of Africans to the United States and the colonies  
26 that became the United States for the purpose of enslavement, including the  
27 treatment of Africans during their transport;
- 28           (iii)   The sale and acquisition of Africans as chattel property in  
29 interstate and intrastate commerce; and
- 30           (iv)    The treatment of African slaves in the colonies and the United  
31 States, including the deprivation of their freedom, exploitation of their labor, and  
32 destruction of their culture, language, religion, and families;

1           (2)     Examine the extent to which the federal and state governments of  
2 the United States supported the institution of slavery by constitution and by statute,  
3 including economic, political, and social discrimination, and the extent to which the  
4 federal and state governments prevented, opposed, or restricted efforts of freed  
5 African slaves to repatriate to their homeland;

6           (3)     Examine federal and state laws that discriminated against freed  
7 African slaves and their descendants during the period between the end of the Civil  
8 War and the present;

9           (4)     Examine the lingering negative effects of the institution of slavery  
10 and discrimination on African-Americans today and on society in general in the  
11 United States;

12          (5)     Recommend appropriate ways to educate the public of the Task  
13 Force's findings; and

14          (6)     Recommend appropriate remedies in consideration of the Task  
15 Force's findings. In making those recommendations, the Task Force shall address,  
16 among other issues, the following:

17                   (i)     Should the State of Maryland offer a formal apology for the  
18 perpetration of gross human rights violations on African slaves and their  
19 descendants;

20                   (ii)    In consideration of the Task Force's findings, is any form of  
21 compensation to the descendants of African slaves warranted; and

22                   (iii)   If the Task Force finds that compensation is warranted, what  
23 should be the amount of compensation, what form of compensation should be  
24 awarded, and who should be eligible for the compensation.

25          (g)     The Task Force shall report its findings to the Governor and, as provided  
26 in § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly on or before  
27 December 1, 2004.

28     SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
29 October 1, 2003. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 2 months and, at  
30 the end of December 31, 2004, with no further action required by the General  
31 Assembly, this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.