

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2003 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

Senate Bill 434 (Senator Gladden)  
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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**African-American Reparation Task Force**

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This bill establishes a 12-member African-American Task Force to examine certain issues related to the institution of slavery and its effects. The task force must report its findings to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2004.

The bill takes effect October 1, 2003 and terminates December 31, 2004.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for the Department of Legislative Services are assumed to be minimal and could be handled with existing resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** The task force will address the following issues: (1) the institution of slavery in the United States, particularly the capture, transport, sale, and treatment of African slaves; (2) the extent to which the federal and state governments supported the institution of slavery by constitution and statute; (3) federal and state laws that discriminated against African slaves and their descendants from the end of the Civil War to the present; and (4) the lingering negative effects of slavery and discrimination on African-Americans today and U.S. society generally.

The task force is charged with making recommendations for appropriate ways to educate the public of its findings and for appropriate remedies in consideration of those findings. The remedies should address whether the State of Maryland should offer a formal apology for the perpetration of gross human rights violations and whether any form of compensation to the descendants of African slaves is warranted. Compensation recommendations should address the form and amount of compensation, as well as eligibility. The bill directs the Department of Legislative Services to provide staffing for the task force.

**Current Law:** None applicable.

**Background:** A national movement has been underway, led by the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America, to urge the United States government to provide compensation to the descendants of African slaves. U.S. Representative Conyers introduced a bill (HR 40) in January 2003 to establish a commission to examine the institution of slavery and the impact of subsequent racial and economic discrimination on living African-Americans, and to make recommendations to Congress on appropriate remedies. The commission would also recommend appropriate ways to educate the American public of its findings and address whether the U.S. government should offer a formal apology for gross human rights violations against slaves and whether compensation to descendants is warranted.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 19, 2003  
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