
By: **Delegates Marriott, Benson, Branch, Burns, Cane, Carter, C. Davis,
Fulton, Goodwin, Haynes, Jones, Kirk, Nathan-Pulliam, Oaks, Paige,
Parker, Patterson, and Vaughn**

Introduced and read first time: February 4, 2005

Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Reparations for the Enslavement of African Americans**

3 FOR the purpose of supporting a national request for congressional hearings and a
4 federal commission to study and consider reparations for African Americans;
5 and educating Americans about the history of slavery and its current
6 repercussions.

7 WHEREAS, The dehumanization and atrocities of slavery in the United States
8 were mandated by formal laws that were codified and enshrined within the United
9 States Constitution; and

10 WHEREAS, The United States government has never acknowledged,
11 apologized, or otherwise taken responsibility for its role in slavery or segregation, de
12 jure and de facto, and has never made reparations to African Americans for the
13 generations of labor expropriated from them, deprivation of their freedom and rights,
14 and terrorism against them resulting in widespread injury and death; and

15 WHEREAS, The 2001 United Nations World Conference Against Racism held in
16 Durban, South Africa, acknowledged that the transatlantic slave trade and slavery
17 were crimes against humanity; and

18 WHEREAS, H.R. 40 of the 108th Congress of the United States, which even
19 though it did not pass, acknowledged the fundamental injustice and inhumanity of
20 slavery; would have established a commission to study slavery, its subsequent racial
21 and economic discrimination against freed slaves and the impact of those forces on
22 living African Americans today; and proposed recommendations to Congress on
23 appropriate remedies; and

24 WHEREAS, H.R. 40 and the concept of reparations have been supported by
25 state and local resolutions across the country, including legislation passed in the
26 states of Louisiana and California and the city councils of Detroit, Michigan;
27 Cleveland, Ohio; Chicago, Illinois; Evanston, Illinois; Atlanta, Georgia; Washington,
28 D.C.; Baltimore, Maryland; Inglewood, California; Dallas, Texas; Philadelphia,
29 Pennsylvania; Paterson, New Jersey; and Burlington, Vermont; and

1 WHEREAS, Numerous national, state, and local organizations, as well as
2 religious institutions, legal organizations, and labor unions have officially endorsed
3 the concept of reparations and H.R. 40; and

4 WHEREAS, The United States government has acknowledged and taken
5 responsibility for its role in the unjust internment of Japanese Americans during the
6 second World War and has undertaken to pay reparations to the internees and their
7 descendants and to apologize for the unjust abrogation of their rights; and

8 WHEREAS, The United States has lent its support to other reparations claims
9 even where such claims did not take place on United States soil; now, therefore, be it

10 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the
11 General Assembly hereby expresses support for future initiatives similar to H.R. 40
12 and calls upon the State congressional delegation to endorse a similar bill and
13 advocate for its passage in Congress; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That the General Assembly will engage in supportive activities to
15 publicize the concept of reparations and the passage of bills similar to H.R. 40; and be
16 it further

17 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
18 Legislative Services to the Honorable Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor of Maryland;
19 the Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; and
20 the Honorable Michael E. Busch, Speaker of the House of Delegates; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
22 Legislative Services to the Honorable John Conyers, Jr., United States
23 Representative of Michigan, author and primary sponsor of H.R. 40, 2426 Rayburn
24 Building, Washington, D.C. 20515; and the Maryland Congressional Delegation:
25 Senators Paul S. Sarbanes and Barbara A. Mikulski, Senate Office Building,
26 Washington, D.C. 20510; and Representatives Wayne T. Gilchrest, C. A. Dutch
27 Ruppertsberger III, Benjamin L. Cardin, Albert R. Wynn, Steny Hamilton Hoyer,
28 Roscoe G. Bartlett, Elijah E. Cummings, and Christopher Van Hollen, Jr., House
29 Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.