

Testimony in Support of Maryland SB0587 – Maryland Reparations Commission

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2/25/2025

Good afternoon, Honorable Chair Feldman, Honorable Vice Chair Kagan, and esteemed members of this committee.

My name is Adrian Holmes, and I am the President of Alpha Genesis Community Development Corporation and a proud resident of Cambridge, Maryland. I am here today to express my unequivocal support for SB0587, the Maryland Reparations Commission Act.

This bill seeks to establish the Maryland Reparations Commission to study and make recommendations relating to appropriate benefits to be offered to individuals whose ancestors were enslaved in the State or were impacted by certain inequitable government policies; and generally relating to the Maryland Reparations Commission. This is a transformative opportunity to correct long-standing injustices and ignite economic revitalization in historically marginalized communities across our state. As a Southern Marylander, I have witnessed firsthand the devastating impact of systemic disinvestment. Communities like mine have been left behind for far too long. Today, I urge you to take action and support this critical legislation.

Alpha Genesis CDC, has dedicated itself to honoring the legacy of Harriet Tubman and the countless enslaved ancestors who once called Dorchester County home. Because of our relentless efforts, a 13-foot bronze statue now stands at the Dorchester County Courthouse, serving as a beacon of resilience and strength.

Every year, during our Day of Resilience, we solemnly read aloud the names of those enslaved in Dorchester County—many of whom are direct ancestors of families living in our community today. Their legacies call upon us to act. It is our moral obligation to invest in the very communities that have long been denied access to opportunity. SB0587 provides the structure and framework to ensure reparations are identified, measured and distributed equitably via a commission that thoroughly understands the ramifications of enslavement and the effects there of.

SB0587 will enable the Maryland Reparations Commission to identify types of benefits appropriate for reparations which could include financial and mental health guidance and/or other forms of compensation that provide the infrastructure improvements these communities desperately need, ensuring every Marylander—regardless of their zip code—has the tools to succeed.

The Maryland Reparations Commission is more than just a bill—it is a moral imperative and a commitment to justice, equity, and economic empowerment. It also gives foundational support to SB0468, the Harriet Tubman Community Investment Act, these bills in tandem provide for the foundation and administration of our chance to rectify past injustices and build a future where all Marylanders have an equal opportunity for success.

I strongly urge the General Assembly to pass SB0587 that will lay the groundwork for change in communities where Marylanders need these investments the most.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Adrian Holmes, President

Alpha Genesis Community Development