



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY

SB 587: *State Government - Maryland Reparations Commission*

Good afternoon, Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison and members of the House Health & Government Operations Committee.

Senate Bill 587 seeks to establish the Maryland Reparations Commission to study and make recommendations on appropriate benefits for individuals impacted by historical inequality in the state of Maryland.

Maryland, like much of the nation, has a deeply complex history regarding racial inequities, from the era of slavery to modern-day disparities in wealth, education, housing, and healthcare. The lasting impact of these injustices continues to shape the lives of many Marylanders today. This commission represents an important step toward acknowledging and addressing the harm inflicted upon generations of Black Marylanders.

This bill proposes a structured, research-driven approach to examining the feasibility and impact of reparations. Specifically, the commission will:

1. Study historical injustices in Maryland and how they have contributed to systemic disparities.
2. Assess and recommend appropriate benefits whether economic, educational, or community-based ensuring that reparations are meaningful and impactful.
3. Establish eligibility criteria and processes for potential recipients, ensuring transparency and fairness in any recommendations.

In addition, the commission will rely on rigorous research, examining reparations efforts nationwide, evaluating past government policies, and considering the role of institutions that have historically benefited from these injustices. The goal is not just to acknowledge the past but to create a well-researched, actionable path toward equity.

While the bill does have a fiscal impact, the benefits of this work are immeasurable. By addressing historical disparities, we not only invest in justice but also foster economic growth, stronger communities, and a more inclusive Maryland.

Therefore, I respectfully urge the committee to give SB 587 a FAVORABLE report to advance this critical conversation for the future of our state.