

HB1271_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
03/11/2026
Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#1271 - FAVORABLE
Reparations - Board, Fund, and Excise Tax on Endowments – Establishment

TO: Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and members of the Government, Labor and Elections Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#1271, **Reparations - Board, Fund, and Excise Tax on Endowments – Establishment**

As reported by Maryland Matters on December 16, 2025, *Legislature overrides Moore’s veto, approves creation of reparations commission*¹

[The bill](#) establishes a 23-member voluntary commission to assess specific federal, state and local policies from 1877 to 1965, the post-Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras, and to examine how public and private institutions may have benefited from policies that led to discrimination. The commission is also charged with recommending appropriate reparations, from a statement of apology to monetary compensation or social service assistance.

“Let’s be clear: Slavery may have ended 150 years ago, but segregation, redlining, discrimination, stretched well into our own lifetime,” [Senator] Sydnor said. “The laboring effects are real, and we cannot prepare [for] what we refuse to acknowledge. Mission is not about blaming individuals. It’s about fixing systems.”

This bill will begin the fixing process by setting up institutions to deal with the results of the commission study and delineate a funding mechanism if reparation payments are to occur.

As documented by the ACLU Maryland in their position paper *Reparations for Slavery Now*²

We will never achieve racial justice in America if this country does not examine the impact of slavery and its legacy – and make strides toward achieving reparatory justice.

No amount of material resources or monetary compensation can ever be sufficient restitution for the spiritual, mental, cultural, and physical damage inflicted on African Americans ripped from their families and nations to labor for the enrichment of the United States. After the "abolition" of slavery, those emancipated suffered violent repression, oppression, exploitation, and deprivation under Jim Crow laws and Black codes in the South, as well as de facto segregation in every region of this nation.

¹ <https://marylandmatters.org/2025/12/16/legislature-overrides-moores-veto-approves-creation-of-reparations-commission/>

² <https://www.aclu-md.org/reparations/>

HB1271_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

Reparations are about acknowledging the damages inflicted on Black Americans through enslavement and post-emancipation exclusionary policies; repair, healing, respect, and restoring Black dignity and reconciliation, so that we can walk together to create a more just and humane society.

This bill will establish the Reparations Board to make certain examinations regarding reparations payments and make recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly to provide grants to persons impacted by historic inequality; impose an excise tax on nonpublic institutions that have an endowment of at least \$2,000,000,000; require the revenue from the endowment excise tax to be deposited into the Maryland Reparations Fund to provide grants to persons impacted by historic inequality; etc.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#1271.