

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_, SERIES 2021

**A RESOLUTION RELATING TO THE SUPPORT OF FEDERAL REPARATIONS LEGISLATION AND THE PURPOSE OF HOUSE RESOLUTION 40 OF THE 117TH CONGRESS. (AMENDMENT BY SUBSTITUTION).**

**SPONSORED BY: COUNCIL PRESIDENT DAVID JAMES**

**WHEREAS**, from 1619 to 1865, roughly 4,000,000 Africans and their descendants were enslaved in the United States and its predecessor colonies; and

**WHEREAS**, slavery as an institution was officially sanctioned and enshrined by the United States Government in its Constitution and its statutes; and

**WHEREAS**, the institution of slavery served to brutally and immorally deprive Africans of their birthright citizenship, and to strip them and their descendants of agency and liberty over their lives, and of the fruits of their own hard labor; and

**WHEREAS**, the abolition of the institution of sanctioning the actual ownership of human beings in no way ended practices at the federal, state and local levels that effectively kept enslaved people and their descendants in positions of servitude and at an economic disadvantage – practices such as redlining, share cropping, unequal educational opportunities, disproportionately harsh treatment by the criminal justice system, among others; and

**WHEREAS**, as a result of these longstanding and pernicious practices, Black Americans continue to be burdened with significantly worse health, educational, and employment opportunities, leading to significantly higher incarceration rates, unemployment at over twice the rate of White Americans, and an accumulated wealth of only 1/16<sup>th</sup> of that currently held by White households; and

**WHEREAS**, on January 4, 2021, the United States House of Representatives introduced legislation to commence the process of addressing these inequities, through House Resolution 40; and,

**WHEREAS**, the legislation's stated purpose is to create a Commission to study and develop reparations proposals for the descendants of African Americans; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States of America has provided reparations in the past to redress systemic violations of human rights, such as:

- the District of Columbia Emancipation Act of 1862, signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln, to provide up to \$300 per emancipated slave to slave owners; and
- the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, signed into law by President Richard Nixon, to provide \$1 billion and 44 million acres of land to Alaskan Natives to resolve long-standing issues surrounding aboriginal land claims; and
- the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, signed into law by President Ronald Reagan, to provide \$1.2 billion to Japanese Americans and \$5.4 million to Unangans (Aleuts) who had been interned during World War II as well as a \$6.4 million trust fund for their communities; and
- in 2015, the U.S. Department of State agreed to oversee distribution of \$60 million from the French National Assembly to provide reparations for Holocaust survivors and also allocated \$12 million for further direct assistance.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE LOUISVILLE/JEFFERSON COUNTY METRO GOVERNMENT ("COUNCIL") AS FOLLOWS:**

**SECTION I:** The Council urges Congress to pass House Resolution 40 during the 117<sup>th</sup> Session of Congress.

**SECTION II:** The Council strongly urges the United States Congress and the President of the United States to recognize the term Black American Descendants of

Slavery instead of “African American” in the examination of the legacy of slavery and recommendations for redress.

**SECTION III:** The Council concurs with the purpose of HR 40 and federal reparations legislation to study 1) the role of the federal and state governments in supporting the institution of slavery; 2) forms of discrimination in the public and private sectors against freed slaves and their descendants; and 3) lingering negative effects of slavery on living black Americans of the United States.

**SECTION IV:** The Louisville Metro Council Clerk shall transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, to each Senator and Representative from the Commonwealth of Kentucky in the Congress of the United States, and to the Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

**SECTION V:** This Resolution shall take effect upon passage and approval.

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Sonya Harward  
Metro Council Clerk

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David James  
President of the Council

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Greg Fischer  
Mayor

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Approval Date

**APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY:**  
Michael J. O’Connell  
Jefferson County Attorney

BY: \_\_\_\_\_

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