

Senate Joint Memorial 4

Sponsored by Senator FREDERICK (at the request of former Representative Tiffany Mitchell) (Pre-session filed.)

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Urges Congress to enact legislation to begin process of implementing reparations for African Americans based on slavery and discrimination.

JOINT MEMORIAL

1 To the President of the United States and the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United
2 States of America, in Congress assembled:

3 We, your memorialists, the Eighty-first Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon, in legisla-
4 tive session assembled, respectfully represent as follows:

5 Whereas more than 400 years have passed since the first arrival of enslaved Africans to
6 present-day America; and

7 Whereas the Congress of the United States has established the 400 Years of African-American
8 History Commission to commemorate the historic heritage and contributions that Americans of
9 African descent have made to help shape the cultural, academic, social, economic and moral attri-
10 butes of this nation; and

11 Whereas approximately four million Africans and their descendants were enslaved in the United
12 States and colonies that became the United States between 1619 and 1865; and

13 Whereas the institution of chattel slavery was constitutionally and statutorily sanctioned by the
14 government of the United States from 1789 through 1865; and

15 Whereas chattel slavery flourished in the United States and constituted an immoral and inhu-
16 mane deprivation of life, liberty, citizenship rights and cultural heritage, and denied enslaved per-
17 sons the fruits of their own labor; and

18 Whereas as a result of historical and continued discrimination, African American descendants
19 of slaves continue to suffer debilitating economic, educational and health hardships, including an
20 unemployment rate more than twice the current white unemployment rate and an average of six
21 percent of the wealth of white families, a disparity which has worsened, not improved, over time;
22 and

23 Whereas African Americans have been unjustly targeted by law enforcement and criminal jus-
24 tice procedures, incarcerated at disproportionate rates and subsequently excluded from full partic-
25 ipation in the benefits of citizenship that include voting, employment, housing and health care; and

26 Whereas a preponderance of scholarly and legal evidentiary documentation constitutes the basis
27 for inquiry into the ongoing effects of the institution of chattel slavery and its legacy of persistent
28 systemic structures of discrimination on living African descendants of slaves in the United States;
29 and

30 Whereas modern conceptualizations of reparations for descendants of African slaves have re-
31

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 sulted in research without implementation of proposed recommendations; and

2 Whereas it is imperative that the Congress of the United States explore the role of federal and
3 state governments in supporting the institution of slavery, the forms of discrimination against freed
4 slaves and their descendants and the lingering negative effects of slavery on living African Ameri-
5 cans and society; and

6 Whereas systemic racism was created over centuries and will take time to dismantle; and

7 Whereas the federal government has a responsibility to adopt programs, policies and funding to
8 address reparations; and

9 Whereas House Resolution 40, the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for
10 African-Americans Act, would initiate the long overdue and vital process of implementing
11 reparations; now, therefore,

12 **Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:**

13 That we, the members of the Eighty-first Legislative Assembly, recognize the need to pursue
14 avenues to implement reparations for the descendants of African slaves in the United States; and
15 be it further

16 Resolved, That we respectfully urge the Congress of the United States to pass, and the President
17 to sign, House Resolution 40, the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for
18 African-Americans Act; and be it further

19 Resolved, That a copy of this memorial shall be sent to the President of the United States, to
20 the Senate Majority Leader, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and to each member
21 of the Oregon Congressional Delegation.

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