

Reparations on the Horizon in California

Growing up in the 90s, the prospect of [reparations](#) seemed unlikely. I was aware that a subset of the population supported payments to the descendants of slaves, but back then, it seemed as if most people, regardless of how they felt toward such a policy, didn't believe it would ever actually be implemented. It just wasn't in the cards—or so we thought.

Times have changed. Thanks to the [woke](#) left, reparations are rapidly gaining salience. While such a proposal faces massive hurdles at the national level, it is already a reality in some blue states.

California provides one of the more noteworthy examples of a state pushing forward with reparations. Thanks to assembly bill 3121, which was [enacted](#) in September 2020, California has a special task force charged with “studying the institution of slavery and its lingering negative effects on living African Americans.” The task force was also tasked with recommending “appropriate remedies of compensation, rehabilitation, and restitution for African Americans.”

The California Office of the Attorney General's website contains the following rationale for reparations:

“The institution of slavery is inextricably woven into the establishment, history, and prosperity of the United States. Constitutionally and statutorily sanctioned from 1619 to 1865, slavery deprived more than four million Africans and their descendants of life, liberty, citizenship, cultural heritage, and economic opportunity. Following the abolition of slavery, government entities at the federal, state, and local levels continued to perpetuate, condone, and often profit from practices that

brutalized African Americans and excluded them from meaningful participation in society. This legacy of slavery and racial discrimination has resulted in debilitating economic, educational, and health hardships that are uniquely experienced by African Americans.”

Slavery was cruel. Few would deny that. But the last line in the above paragraph is contentious. While African Americans do suffer worse outcomes than other groups in many areas of life, the degree to which that can be ascribed to slavery is debatable. After all, African Americans had a significantly lower rate of out-of-wedlock births—indicating [the critical family environment](#) is unstable—in the [50s](#) (17 percent) than they do [now](#) (nearly 70 percent). That cannot be blamed on slavery, so clearly other factors are involved.

But the left continues to insist that slavery is the reason why black people, on average, aren’t doing as well as other races—and those who question this are branded “racists” and ignored. Heaven forbid anyone notice that government handouts, including these potential reparations, have replaced fathers in black communities.

So committed are California liberals to the cause of reparations that the state’s task force apparently wasn’t enough: San Francisco opted to [create](#) its very own reparations committee. When it comes to free money—a popular policy these days—it seems that more is more.

And that’s no joke. At a hearing last Wednesday in Sacramento, the California reparations task force was [told](#) by angry residents that the San Francisco reparations committee’s proposal to give black residents \$5 million each was insufficient.

One speaker told the task force that the amount should be much higher:

“I believe that \$5 million in reparations is too little for

the work that foundational black Americans have done for this country and as well for other countries. I believe that \$7.6 million is a number that can be used very wisely in our foundational black American communities.”

Another speaker, Reverend Tony Pierce, lambasted the \$5 million proposal:

“Where’s the money? Where’s the cash? Where’s the check? \$5 million, San Francisco’s already made a move. \$5 million is nothing, and I’ll tell you why.”

According to him, “you’ll be lucky if you end up with \$40,000 a year,” given the fact that the \$5 million would be disbursed over the course of 50 years and would be subject to taxes.

How California ultimately decides to implement a reparations policy, assuming the state does so at all, will be interesting to observe. July 1 is the deadline for the task force to issue recommendations. However, both the California state legislature and Governor Gavin Newsom must sign off on a reparations proposal before it passes. But given that the Democrats hold a [veto-proof supermajority](#) in the former, and the latter is notoriously woke, it is likely some form of reparations will be issued.

Let us hope that it doesn’t. If implemented in California, reparations could soon come to other blue states. And while no one can predict the future, providing more welfare to African Americans is unlikely to improve their outcomes. As previously stated, there’s a serious case to be made that many problems black Americans face are the result of government programs that effectively destroyed the black family. Will reparations give black children fathers? I doubt it.

And what of the national level? Fortunately, most Americans do not support reparations. According to a 2021 Pew Research Center [survey](#), 68 percent of Americans say the descendants of slaves should not be repaid. Interestingly, but perhaps not

surprisingly, support for reparations is far [higher](#) among African Americans (77 percent).

Regardless, public opinion can change quickly. But if those touting reparations to fix racism and slavery really cared, would they not be talking about ways to restore the [nuclear family](#) for black children?

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