

New York State Community Commission on Reparations Remedies

An Introduction



Brief Overview and Context

Brief Overview and Context – Slave Market at foot of Wall Street, 1711

NEW YORK'S MUNICIPAL SLAVE MARKET

On Wall Street, between Pearl and Water Streets, a market that auctioned enslaved people of African ancestry was established by a Common Council law on November 30, 1711. This slave market was in use until 1762. Slave owners wanting to hire out their enslaved workers, which included people of Native American ancestry, as day laborers also had to do so at that location. In 1726 the structure was renamed the Meal Market because corn, grain and meal — crucial ingredients to the Colonial diet — were also exclusively traded there.

Slavery was introduced to Manhattan in 1626. By the mid-18th century approximately one in five people living in New York City was enslaved and almost half of Manhattan households included at least one slave. Although New York State abolished slavery in 1827, complete abolition came only in 1841 when the State of New York abolished the right of non-residents to have slaves in the state for up to nine months. However, the use of slave labor elsewhere for the production of raw materials such as sugar and cotton was essential to the economy of New York both before and after the Civil War. Slaves also cleared forest land for the construction of Broadway and were among the workers that built the wall that Wall Street is named for and helped build the first Trinity Church. Within months of the market's construction, New York's first slave uprising occurred a few blocks away on Maiden Lane, led by enslaved people from the Coromantee and Pawpaw peoples of Ghana.



Artist's Rendering, modified detail from The Burgis View, c.1719-21, New York Public Library



NYC Parks

Brief Overview and Context – Emancipation Day

Emancipation of the Negroes – The Past and the Future (from "Harper's Weekly")

Thomas Nast American, born Germany

Publisher Harper's Weekly American – January 24, 1863

On January 1, 1863 Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, an executive order based on his constitutional authority as commander in chief.

All enslaved persons in Confederate territory were declared to be forever free. Nast held strong liberal views and his family had emigrated from Germany to New York in 1848 to escape persecution.

Here he created a striking, complex image for Harper's Weekly that celebrates the promise inherent in the proclamation. In a large central vignette an African American family enjoy domestic tranquility around a "Union" stove while, immediately below, a baby symbolizing the New Year breaks the shackles of a kneeling slave. Scenes at left detail horrors associated with slavery—whipping, branding and the separation of families.

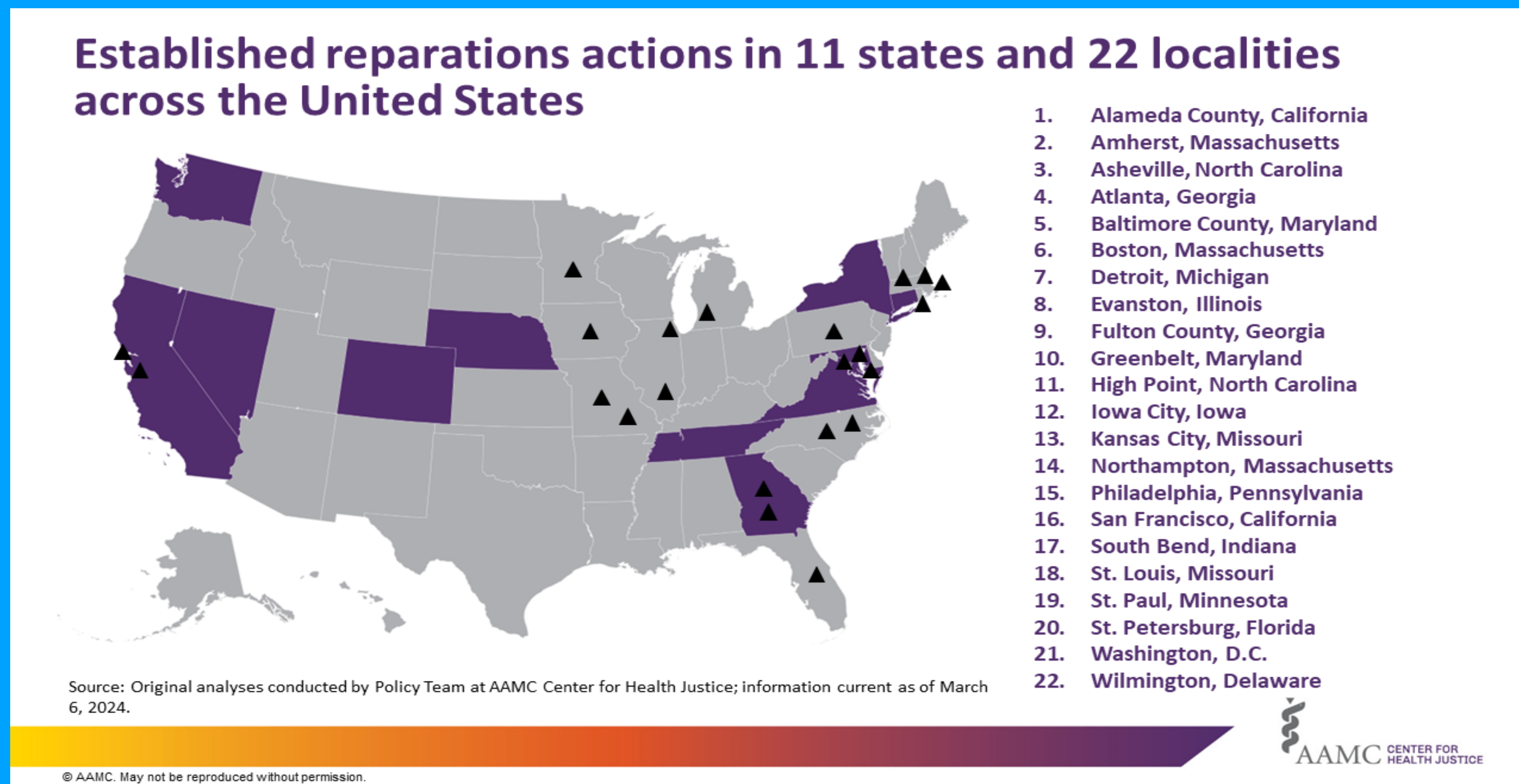
At right, these are contrasted with future blessings—payment for work, public education, and enjoying one's own home, goals that could only be realized if the Union won the war.



Source: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/429270>

Brief Overview and Context

- California is first state in the U.S. to establish a Reparations Task Force in 2020. The Final Report by the Task Force was issued to the California Legislature on June 29, 2023.



Source: <https://www.aamchealthjustice.org/resources/policy/reparations>

Brief Overview and Context - H.R.40 — 118th Congress (2023-2024)

Introduced in U.S. House of Representatives (01/09/2023*) – National Reparations Bill

**The Commission to Study Reparations proposed under H.R. 40, was first introduced in 1989 by Representative John Conyers, Jr. (D-Michigan). The bill has been reintroduced to Congress every year since, without passage. The current bill is sponsored by the late Representative Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas).*

**Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act
The bill would establish a federal Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals**

The commission must (1) compile documentary evidence of slavery in the United States; (2) study the role of the federal and state governments in supporting the institution of slavery; (3) analyze discriminatory laws and policies against freed African slaves and their descendants; and (4) recommend ways the United States may recognize and remedy the effects of slavery and discrimination on African Americans, including through a formal apology and compensation (i.e., reparations).

The commission consists of individuals from civil society and reparations organizations and individuals appointed by the President and congressional leadership; Members of Congress and governmental employees may not serve on the commission. The commission may hold hearings, subpoena witnesses and records, and contract with other entities to conduct its work. The commission must submit its final report within 18 months of its first meeting.

Brief Overview and Context

NYS Senate Bill S1163A – Adopted January 10, 2023

Gov. Kathy Hochul signed into law December 19, 2023

Bill Sponsors:

- **Senator James Sanders, Jr. (10th District)**
- **Assemblymember Michaelle Solages (22nd District)**



The NYS Community Commission on Reparations Remedies was established through legislation signed by Governor Hochul on December 19, 2023.

The Commission is tasked with:

- **Examining the legacy of slavery, subsequent discrimination against people of African descent, and the impact these forces continue to have in the present day**
- **Comprising a report of recommendations for appropriate action to address these longstanding inequities.**

The final report is to be submitted to the temporary President of the Senate, the Speaker of the Assembly, the minority leaders of the Senate and the Assembly, and the Governor of the State of New York, no later than one year after the date of the first meeting of the commission.

The Community Commission

Pervasiveness of Slavery in New York State – 1800 Census

A STATEMENT,
Shewing the Aggregate Number of PERSONS in each of the Wards of the City of New-York, and in each of the Counties in this State, including, however, no more than three-fifths of the whole number of Slaves.

	Free fons.	Per-Three fifths of Slaves.	Aggregate.
City and county of New-York,			
First Ward,	3,903	250	4,153
Second do.	4,622	327	4,949
Third do.	6,068	168	6,236
Fourth do.	9,514	252	6,766
Fifth do.	8,878	222	9,100
Sixth do.	12,779	178	12,957
Seventh do.	14,857	322	15,179
	57,621	1,719	59,349
County of			
Richmond,	3,888	405	4,293
Suffolk,	18,578	531	19,109
Queens,	15,365	918	16,283
Kings,	4,261	888	5,149
Westchester,	26,169	756	26,925
Rockland,	5,802	330	6,132
Orange,	28,208	687	28,895
Ulster,	22,598	1,353	23,951
Dutchess,	46,166	966	47,132
Columbia,	32,851	882	34,733
Delaware,	10,212	9	10,221
Green,	12,064	312	12,376
Rensselaer,	29,552	534	30,086
Albany,	32,235	1,086	33,321
Washington,	35,494	48	35,542
Clinton and Essex,	8,456	35	8,491
Saratoga,	24,125	216	24,341
Schoharie,	9,454	213	9,667
Montgomery,	21,234	279	21,513
Herkemer,	14,418	36	14,454
Oneida,	21,997	30	22,027
Onondaga,	7,395	6	7,401
Otsego,	21,588	27	21,615
Chenango,	15,650	9	15,659
Tioga,	6,862	9	6,871
Cayuga,	15,818	32	15,850
Ontario,	15,161	33	15,194
Steuben,	1,766	12	1,778
Total,	565,988	12,362	578,349

While numbers do not explain the everyday realities of slavery in the eighteenth century, they do provide a sense of the pervasiveness of the peculiar institution even in a northern state like New York. This broadside provides figures from the 1800 census in New York. It offers a breakdown of the free population of each county in the state as well as three-fifths of the number of slaves present.

The US Constitution permitted 60 percent, or three-fifths, of slaves to be counted toward the total population of each state in a compromise designed to provide the southern states with greater representation in Congress and the Electoral College.

It is well known that the “three-fifths clause” of the Constitution enhanced southern claims to power. However, what is less known is the North’s complicity in slavery, which is illustrated through these census numbers. While New York’s leaders had passed a bill for the gradual abolition of slavery in 1799, it was not fully implemented until 1827.

Therefore, New York included 60 percent of those held in bondage within its borders in the census counts of 1800, 1810, and 1820.

Source: Slavery in the New York State census, 1800
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www.gilderlehrman.org

The Community Commission for Reparation Remedies

Commissioners:

Linda Brown-Robinson

Lurie Daniel-Favors, Esq.

Dr. Ron Daniels

Dr. Darrick Hamilton

Dr. Seanelle Hawkins

Timothy R. Hogue

Jennifer Jones Austin

Dr. Deborah D. Jenkins

Linda Tarrant-Reid



The Community Commission

Core Mandates

- **Research economic, social, and political impact of slavery and discrimination on Black New Yorkers from 1626 to present day**
- **Determine who is eligible for reparations**
- **Hold public hearings to gather community input**
- **Develop a comprehensive report outlining harms and reparative measures**
- **Recommend policies, programs and restorative payments**
- **Coordinate with local, state, and national stakeholders to ensure alignment with broader reparations initiatives**

The Community Commission Contact Information

- <https://www.ny.gov/reparations> - Official Website
- reparationscommission@reparations.ny.gov – Official Email

An official website of New York State [Here's how you know](#) ▾

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PROGRAMS
New York State Community Commission on Reparations Remedies

OVERVIEW

The New York State Community Commission on Reparations Remedies is tasked with examining the legacy of slavery, subsequent discrimination against people of African descent, and the impact these forces continue to have in the present day. Governor Hochul signed [bill S.1163-A/A.7691 establishing the Commission](#) on December 19, 2023.

**Attend a Meeting or
Public Hearing**

Business Meetings

Business Meetings: The primary focus of these meetings is to take care of the internal business of the Commission, including internal discussions, decision-making, planning by the Commissioners, and voting on resolutions, as necessary. A quorum of at least five Commissioners must be present to hold any votes. These meetings are open to the public, but because these meetings are devoted primarily to Commission business, the time for receiving public comment may be limited to a short period at the end of the meeting. Business meetings will be webcast, and video recordings will be available on the Commission's website for later viewing.

Public Hearings

Public Hearings: Public hearings provide an opportunity for the community and other interested parties to share input and concerns and provide testimony on topics relevant to the Commission's mission and assist it in carrying out its mandate to examine the institution of slavery in New York and recommend appropriate remedies and reparations in consideration of the Commission's findings. The Commission may invite speakers to provide prepared testimony on particular topics, but the Commission also intends to devote a significant part of the agenda to hearing from members of the public wishing to speak. Because public hearings are focused on gathering information rather than on conducting Commission business, a quorum of Commissioners is not required, but the Commission intends to have at least two or three Commissioners present at every public hearing. Public hearings will be webcast, and video recordings will be available on the Commission's website for later viewing.

Written Comments

Written Comments: Even if you are unable to attend a meeting or hearing, the Commission would still like to hear from you. Members of the community and other interested parties are always welcome to submit written comments to the Commission's email address at ReparationsCommission@reparations.ny.gov

Get Involved?

Get Involved?

Help us determine what reparations can look like in New York State

- **Economic restitution through Housing, Education, and Employment Programs**
- **Addressing the inequities including: Black Wealth Gap, Criminal Justice, Food Insecurity, Environmental Justice**
- **Addressing disparities in Healthcare access and outcomes**
- **Investments in Black-owned businesses**
- **Educational reforms and historical recognition**
- **Direct financial compensation to descendants of Enslaved Africans and African American residents of NYS impacted by the legacy of Slavery**
- **Other suggestions to remedy the harm and impact of Slavery? What are your ideas?**

How Can You Get Involved?

- **Attend Public Hearings and Community Forums**
- **Stream a Business Meeting**
- **Host a Public Hearing**
- **Email Recommendations to the Commission's Email Address**
- **Form an official Work Group to the Commission**
- **Engage in Dialogues and Workshops on Reparations in your Community**
- **Volunteer for Community Outreach Initiatives**

How Can You Get Involved?

We Are Hiring!

- **Executive Director**
- **Operations Manager**
- **Parliamentarian**
- **Historian**
- **General Counsel**
- **Policy Director**
- **Communications Director**



New York State Community Commission on Reparations Remedies

Reparations Executive Committee

Dr. Seanelle Hawkins – Chair

Dr. Deborah D. Jenkins – Vice Chair

Linda Tarrant-Reid – Secretary

Jennifer Jones Austin – Treasurer

