



Written by [Brian Koenig](#) on August 3, 2011

N.C. Seeks Reparations for Victims of Infamous Sterilization Program

Former Gov. Mike Easley apologized to the sterilization victims in 2002, but no compensation was ever agreed upon.

Although about half a dozen states have issued public apologies for their own sterilization programs, North Carolina is the first to mull over a concrete reparation plan.

The task force's preliminary report did not settle on a precise dollar amount for payments, but recommendations [range](#) from \$20,000 to \$50,000, and some task force panel members also requested that victims' estates be made eligible for payments.



Many of the program's victims have shown public discontent with how long the compensation process is taking. For instance, 57-year-old Elaine Riddick of Atlanta, who was sterilized when she was only 14 years old, is agitated with the government's ongoing delays. "I don't think it's fair to the victims that they're doing this at their own pace," she [declared](#). "And I think they need to get on up and do what they need to do. Get it over with.... Can you imagine how much money they have put out just to study this case?"

Others believe the suggested payments are not sufficient to repay the degree of suffering that victims have endured over the decades. Margaret Helen Check, who had three children at the time, was diagnosed with schizophrenia and sterilized in 1965. Check's daughter Australia Clay believes that her mother, who died of a stroke in 1965, endured years of post-partum depression. "There just was a holocaust in our state," she said, "and this is something the state is going to have to pay for. I am disappointed that they did not make the decision that if the victim is dead, the amount of compensation would go to the estate. Twenty-thousand dollars is not enough. Well, \$1 million wouldn't be enough."

North Carolina's fiscal problems will undoubtedly play a role in the government's final decision. The state's financial blunders are already unsettling, and legislative approval would mean further strain on its meager budget.

But the task force insists that such a historic atrocity justifies reparations for its victims. "We know that in a period of tight budgets, compensation may not be popular among your constituents," the task force [wrote](#) Gov. Beverly Perdue. "For many citizens, it may be hard to justify spending millions when the state is cutting back on other essential services. But the fact is, there never will be a good time to redress these wrongs and the victims have already waited too long."

The barbarous practice of eugenics was originally aimed at establishing a more utopian society by filtering out "undesirables," which in the view of eugenicists included the psychologically ill, criminals, and in many cases, specific ethnic groups.

One of Planned Parenthood's much-avoided verities is its origin in unbridled racism. The organization's founder, Margaret Sanger (pictured above), led a virulent campaign to implement eugenics programs in



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the United States during the early 20th century. At an international birth control conference in March 1925, Dr. Adolphus Knopf, a staunch member of Sanger's American Birth Control League (ABCL) — now known as Planned Parenthood — [warned](#) of the "menacing" peril posed by the "black" and "yellow" races.

Lothrop Stoddard, another one of Sanger's colleagues and author of the 1920 book *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World Supremacy*, was a Nazi zealot who believed that the genocide of the Third Reich was "scientific" and "humanitarian." Dr. Harry Laughlin, an ABCL board member, advocated a purification of America's "breeding stock" and proclaimed that the country's "bad strains" must be eradicated, including the "shiftless, ignorant, and worthless class of antisocial whites of the South."

But Sanger's colleagues were not alone at the eugenics forefront, as Sanger herself spoke of sterilizing the "unfit," which, she argued, would bring about the "salvation of American civilization." She despised religion and classified the African-American race as "undesirables." Included in Sanger's echelon of the "irresponsible and reckless" class were those "whose religious scruples prevent their exercising control over their numbers." Further, she [averred](#), "There is no doubt in the minds of all thinking people that the procreation of this group should be stopped."

Most would find Sanger's tyrannical campaign against the "undesirables" of America unfathomable, as well as the sterilization programs implemented in the country throughout the 20th century. North Carolina's proposal could pry open the fiscal window for more states to reimburse the tens of thousands of victims nationwide who suffered from this horrific chapter in America's history.

Photo: Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger



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