



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 1, 2020

Newsom Signs Legislation Establishing Task Force on Slavery Reparations

As if California wasn't already operating in the "red," Governor Gavin Newsom (D) has now signed legislation to establish a [nine-member state task force](#) to explore the possibility of slavery reparations for African-Americans.

"As a nation, we can only truly thrive when every one of us has the opportunity to thrive. Our painful history of slavery has evolved into structural racism and bias built into and permeating throughout our democratic and economic institutions," said Newsom on Wednesday afternoon.



AP Images

The task force will study the impact of slavery in California and determine the form of compensation, how it would be dispensed, and whom would be eligible, *The Hill* reports. The task force is required to have its recommendations to the state legislature by July 2023.

Reparations could come in the form of cash, lower tuition, student-loan forgiveness, job training, community investments, or housing assistance, according to the legislation that created the task force. Of course, these "reparations" already exist for those who are in need of them, so it's unclear why a special government-funded task force has been created to work out plans to provide the very same things under a different umbrella.

The call for reparations in California followed after a report for The Roosevelt Institute proposed \$10-\$12 trillion in reparations to all black Americans to eliminate the black-white wealth disparity. Written by Duke University economist William Darity, Jr., and his wife, Kirsten Mullen, the report proposed approximately \$800,000 per African-American household.

"[The] US government — the culpable party — must pay the debt," the report declared. "Ultimately, respect for black Americans as people and as citizens — and acknowledgment, redress, and closure for the history and financial hardship they have endured — requires monetary compensation."

Of course, that's not how it actually works. In an opinion piece against the logic of reparations written last year for Market Watch, Brett Arends observed, "The government doesn't pay for anything. The government doesn't have any money. It's actually \$22 trillion in debt. So the money will come from taxpayers."

California's situation is no different. According to a 2017 report from the California Policy Center, the state's debt-to-GDP ratio is 125 percent, and may be as high as 153 percent if using the broader definition used for federal debt.

"This level places California distressingly close to peripheral Eurozone countries that faced financial crises in 2011 and 2012. Portugal's 2015 debt-to-GDP ratio was 129% and Italy's was 133%," the report said.



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And that was before the [public health crisis](#) and the unprecedented [wildfires](#) of 2020.

Meanwhile, Arends notes reparations to black Americans would create a very expensive slippery slope.

“If we’re going to pay reparations to today’s African-Americans for the wrongs done to their ancestors, we surely have to do the same to today’s Native Americans, who were also treated appallingly,” he wrote.

He continued, “If we’re going to pay reparations for slavery ... shouldn’t we also pay it for the young men conscripted and sent off to die to end it?”

Arends went on to list many other groups who would be eligible for reparations using the same logic to justify reparations for African-Americans, including the family of military members who have died in war.

Given the inordinate cost of reparations, particularly if they were to be paid to every group ever deemed to have been harmed by the government, the Cato Institute asserts they would greatly hinder economic growth in the United States, particularly now, in the aftermath of the pandemic.

“Our national debt is already now up to around \$26-27 trillion given the money we’re spending on Covid,” [said](#) Cato Institute fellow Michael Tanner. “And we’re losing more money because we’re not picking up the revenue because economic growth is so slow right now. This hardly seems the time to burden the economy with more debt, more taxes. Essentially what you want to do is stimulate economic growth for all our benefits.”

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Ben Carson contends reparations are “unworkable.”

“You know, I did my DNA analysis. OK. I’m 77% sub-Saharan African, 20% European, 3% Asian. So how do you proportion that out to everybody?” he posited during an interview with Jericka Duncan in December 2019.

The better solution, he argues, would be to focus on how to “provide the opportunities for people to get into a better economic situation now.”

Americans remain largely opposed to the notion of reparations. A June ABC News/Ipsos [poll](#) found 73 percent of Americans did not believe the government should pay reparations to black Americans descended from slaves.

Townhall’s Jeff Jacoby wrote last year that historic injustices could not be “rectified” by creating new injustices. He elaborated:

To demand compensation for African Americans who were never slaves is not a demand for individual justice but for racial group entitlement. To insist that white Americans in 2019, by virtue of their color, owe a debt for the slavery and repression of centuries past is to preach collective guilt. Few heresies are more antithetical to our aspirations to equality, tolerance, and individual rights. Few are more likely to inflame tribal resentment and contempt.

But while the feasibility and fairness of reparations continues to be debated, overzealous liberals in cities and states throughout the country are continuing to explore reparations as a tool to end “systemic racism” and racial “inequality.” According to VTDigger.org, the Burlington City Council in Vermont voted unanimously in August to create a task force to study reparations payments to Burlington residents descended from slaves. In North Carolina, the Asheville City Council voted unanimously on a



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resolution that calls on North Carolina and the federal government to provide funding for reparations, *The Guardian* reported in July.

California was one of three states to introduce legislation that apologizes for their state's role in slavery and explores monetary reparations, the Huffington Post reported last October. The other two states were New York and Vermont. All three states had either outlawed slavery before the Civil War or never allowed it, HuffPo notes.



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