



Written by [David Kelly](#) on September 11, 2023

## Poll: California Voters Oppose Cash Reparations for Slavery

The results of a [poll](#) released Sunday indicated a majority of California voters oppose the proposed reparation payments to descendants of enslaved black residents currently living in the state by a 2-1 margin, exposing the “steep uphill climb” lawmakers face in implementing the plan.

According to the UC Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) poll, [co-sponsored](#) by the *Los Angeles Times*, 59 percent of voters oppose the California Reparations Task Force [recommendations](#) to make cash payments, compared to 28 percent who support the plan, and “most of those opposed (44%) say they are strongly opposed to the idea.”

Cristina Mora, co-director of the UC Berkeley poll, [noted](#) that “the findings reveal the racial and political contradictions of California voters. While many can empathize with the plight of Black Americans, not all of these feelings will translate into support for policies that address longstanding racial harms. And though this might be an information issue for some groups, the fact that even liberals are divided indicates that campaigns for racial redress will face a steep uphill climb.”

The *Times* [reported](#) over two years ago that Democratic Governor Gavin Newsom, with bipartisan support from state lawmakers, formed the Reparations Task Force “to recommend appropriate remedies to the state Legislature and determine who should be eligible to receive compensation, which advocates hope will become a model in a country where movements to make amends for centuries of slavery have failed to gain traction at the federal level.”

The expert panel assigned to the task force released their suggestions in the first-of-its-kind [report](#) on reparations in July. *The New American* shared that the report represented “the biased views of the [task force panel](#), who apparently subscribe to the false narrative of the 1619 Project’s ideology.”

The utopian viewpoints of the far-left panel, according to the *Times*, “suggested providing cash payments to all descendants based on health disparities, mass incarceration and over-policing and housing discrimination that have adversely affected Black residents compared with white Californians.”



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The paper continued:

The remedies recommended in the report also go far beyond cash payments and include policies to end the death penalty, pay fair market value for jail and prison labor, restore voting rights to all formerly and currently incarcerated people and apply rent caps to historically redlined ZIP Codes that disadvantaged Black residents, among dozens of other suggestions.

What the report failed to share was how the state would fund the [estimated](#) more than \$800 billion cost for reparations, which is nearly three times the state's annual budget. Adding to the astronomical cost is the difficulty Democratic lawmakers will face gaining any support to implement what the poll exposed as an unpopular plan.

The *Times* reported:

State Sen. Steven Bradford (D-Gardena), who served on the task force, said he wasn't surprised by the poll results.

"It speaks to the miseducation of most Americans when it comes to slavery and the impact that it had on this country and the impact that it still has on African Americans today," Bradford said.

Mark DiCamillo, the director of the Berkeley IGS Poll, wrote that the results found "the opinions of Democrats and liberals diverge considerably from those of Republican and conservative voters. Two in three or more of the state's Democrats and liberals see the legacy of slavery as affecting the positions of Black residents a great deal or some, while about two in three Republicans and conservatives take the opposite view and think this legacy does not have any impact at all on today's Black Californians."

The poll exposed the lack of "diversity, equity, and inclusion" represented in the task force's final report by showing that Latinos and Asian-American voters oppose making cash payments to the state's black descendants of slaves by a margin of greater than two to one. "Even larger proportions of white voters (65%) are opposed, of whom 51% are strongly opposed" to the payments, noted DiCamillo.

Given the opportunity to share their reasoning for opposing reparation payments, 60 percent of the California registered voters polled shared that "it's unfair to ask today's taxpayers to pay for wrongs committed in the past." Nearly half said that "it's not fair to single out one group for reparations when other racial and religious groups have been wronged in the past." Those responding in opposition to reparations also added that it would be too difficult to prove who would be eligible for reparations, and that the issue is a national issue and not one that a single state should take on.

It is not clear how the poll results will affect state lawmakers' support for the reparations plan. However, the poll did reveal how the people feel about cash payments for reparations, which should ultimately doom the plan's implementation.



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