

Enslaved population of the United States from 1790-1860



**Overview of AB 3121:
California Task Force
to Study and Develop
Reparation Proposals**

*Personally Curated by:
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Esq. (Chairperson)*

About: AB-3121 California Reparations Task Force

- **AB-3121 authorized the Task Force to hold public hearings to pursue its mission. In order to inform the contents of the final report, the Task Force held 16 public meetings, during which it considered public comments, expert, and personal witness testimony, in addition to considering the voluminous materials submitted to the Task Force via email from those unable to attend the meeting.**
- **As of June 2023, the Task Force heard over 80 hours of testimony from 150+ witnesses and 30+ hours of public comment, and received 3000+ emails and 300+ phone calls.**

About: AB-3121 California Reparations Task Force



What is Reparations?

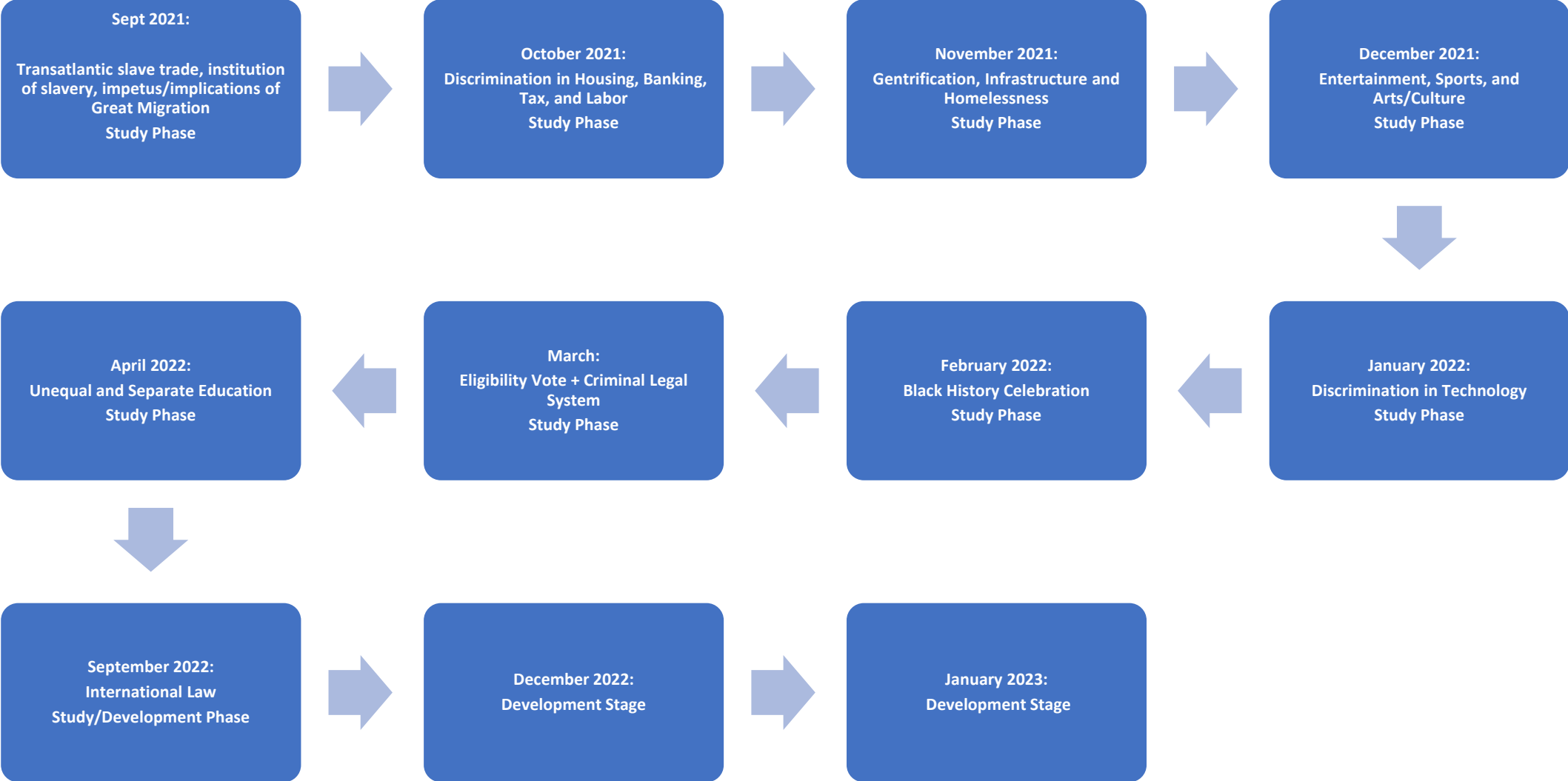
Layman's Definition: Reparations simply means making amends for the offense or harm done.

International Legal Definition: (1) Restitution, (2) Compensation, (3) Rehabilitation, (4) Satisfaction and (5) Guarantees of Non-Repetition

Domestic Examples: Japanese American Internment Camp Survivors; Rosewood, Florida

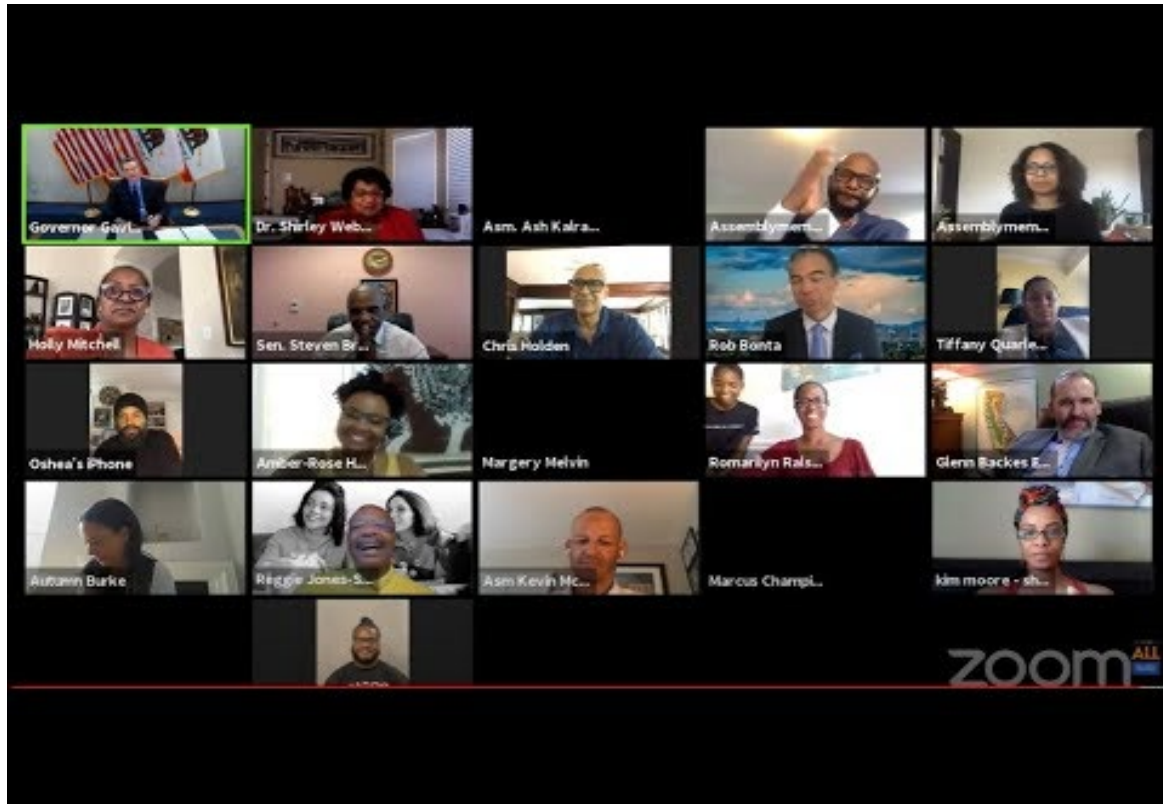
International Examples: Post-Nazi Germany; Holocaust Survivors and heirs; South Africa apartheid (direct victims of police brutality)

Sample of AB-3121 Official Public Hearings



AB- 3121 SIGNING CEREMONY SEPTEMBER 2020

CA REPARATIONS TASK FORCE INAUGURAL MEETING JUNE 2021



Final Report:

- In 1863, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, and, in 1865, the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution commanded that “[n]either slavery nor involuntary servitude ... shall exist within the United States.” In supporting the passage of the 13th Amendment, its co-author Senator Lyman Trumbull of Illinois said that *“it is perhaps difficult to draw the precise line, to say where freedom ceases and slavery begins...”*
- *The United States then experienced a 12-year period after the Civil War called Reconstruction, during which the federal government tried—with some success—to give newly freed African Americans access to basic civil rights. As just one example of the many ways in which this period reflected an expansion of rights, by 1868, more than 700,000 African American men were registered to vote in the former Confederate states.⁴ These advancements came to an abrupt end after the presidential election of 1876, when federal political leaders reached a compromise which resulted in the withdrawal of federal troops from key locations in the South, effectively ending Reconstruction.*
- In 1883, Justice Harlan of the U.S. Supreme Court interpreted the 13th Amendment as empowering Congress “to pass all laws necessary and proper for abolishing all badges and incidents of slavery in the United States.”



California Task Force to Study and Develop
Reparation Proposals for African Americans

INTERIM REPORT

“Badges and Incidents of Slavery”

Ultimately, this Article concludes that the best understanding of the “badges and incidents of slavery” refers to **public or widespread private action, aimed at any racial group or population that has previously been held in slavery or servitude, that mimics the law of slavery and has significant potential to lead to the de facto reenslavement or legal subjugation of the targeted group.** This limited definition will assist Congress in identifying ways in which it can fulfill the Thirteenth Amendment’s promise of universal civil and political freedom. At the same time, it will provide judicially enforceable limits for the exercise of the Section 2 power.

Source: Jennifer Mason McAward, Defining the Badges and Incidents of Slavery, 14 U. Pa. J. Const. L. 561, 592 (2012).

About: Final Report

However, throughout the rest of American history, instead of abolishing the “badges and incidents of slavery,” the **United States federal, state and local governments, including California, perpetuated and created new iterations of these “badges and incidents.”** The resulting harms have been innumerable and have snowballed over generations.



This final report focuses on these harms. So thoroughly have the effects of slavery infected every aspect of American society over the last 400 years, that it is nearly impossible to identify every “badge and incident of slavery,” to include every piece of evidence, or describe every harm done to African Americans.



In order to address this practical reality, this final report of the Reparations Task Force describes a sample of government actions and the compounding harms that have resulted, organized into **12 specific areas of systemic discrimination.**

CALIFORNIA REPARATIONS TASK FORCE

INTERIM REPORT



▲ **PROLIFERATION OF KKK CHAPTERS & MEETINGS**

▲ **REDLINING**

▲ **"WHITES ONLY" TOWNS & NEIGHBORHOODS**

▲ **LAWS & ORDINANCES SUPPORTING SEGREGATION IN SCHOOLS**

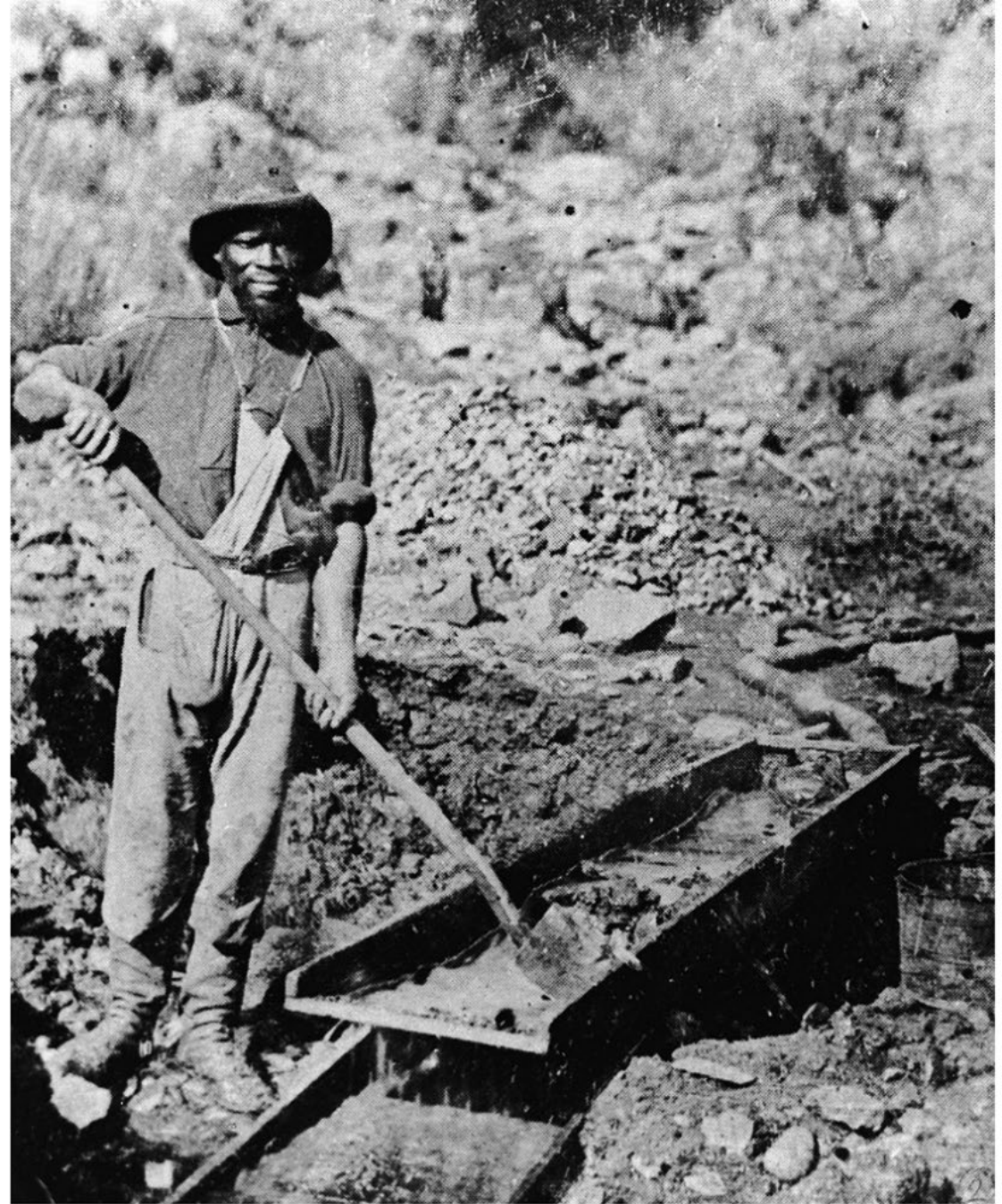
TWELVE
CHAPTERS

(BADGES &
INCIDENTS
OF SLAVERY):

- Enslavement
 - Racial Terror
 - Political Disenfranchisement
 - Housing Segregation
 - Separate and Unequal Education
 - Racism in Environment & Infrastructure
 - Pathologizing Black Families
 - Control Over Creative, Cultural, and Intellectual Life
 - Stolen Labor and Hindered Opportunity
 - Unjust Legal System
 - Mental and Physical Harm and Neglect
 - Wealth Gap

II. Enslavement

- **Nationally:** The foundation of America's wealth was built upon trafficked African peoples and their descendants—built by their forced labor and their bodies as they were bought and sold as commodities. American government at all levels allowed or participated in exploiting, abusing, terrorizing, and murdering people of African descent so that mostly white Americans could profit from their enslavement.
 - **California:** Despite California entering the Union in 1850 as a free state, its early state government supported slavery. 1,500 enslaved African Americans lived in California in 1852.
 - Proslavery white southerners held a great deal of power in the state legislature, the court system, and among California's representatives in the U.S. Congress.
-



An African-American miner poses with a shovel in Auburn Ravine during the Gold Rush, California. (1852)

III. Racial Terror

- **Nationally:** After slavery, white Americans, frequently aided by the government, maintained the badges of slavery by carrying out violence and intimidation against African Americans for decades. Racial terror pervaded every aspect of post-slavery Black life and prevented African Americans from building the same wealth and political influence as white Americans.
- **California:** Supported by their government, ordinary citizens also terrorized and murdered Black Californians. The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) established local chapters all over the state in the 1920s. During that time, California sometimes even held more KKK events than Mississippi or Louisiana. Many of California's KKK members were prominent individuals who held positions in civil leadership and police departments.

KLANSMEN IN THE TOWN OF BREA 1924-1936



2/3 of the fire chiefs



5 of the first 8 mayors



6 of 10 councilmen on board of trustees



Half the treasurers, engineers, clerks and marshals

COURTESY OF LOS ANGELES EXAMINER/USC LIBRARIES/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES



Rayfield Lundy, Republican candidate for the California 55th Assembly District inspects a burnt cross at 1816 East 122nd Street, Los Angeles, California. (1952)

IV. Political Disenfranchisement

- **Nationally:** African Americans have pursued equal political participation since before the Civil War, but the federal, state, and local governments of the United States have suppressed and continue to suppress Black votes and Black political power.
- **California:** California also passed and enforced laws to prevent Black Californians from accumulating political power. California did not allow Black men to vote until 1879. The state also passed many of the voter suppression laws that were used in the South. California prohibited individuals convicted of felonies from voting, added a poll tax, and put in place a literacy test.

V. Housing Segregation



Los Angeles, CA., William Bailey and Roger Duncan look at the wreckage in Bailey's living room after a bomb exploded in the house. Duncan's house, directly across the street, was also bombed at the same time and a note was left threatening all the Black families on the street if they didn't move out. (1952)

- **Nationally:** Government actors, working with private individuals, actively segregated America into Black and white neighborhoods. Although this system of segregation was called Jim Crow in the South, it existed by less obvious, but effective means throughout the entire country, including in California.
- **California:** Like elsewhere in the country, white Californians used violence to enforce the racial hierarchy created during slavery by preventing African Americans from moving into desirable white neighborhoods. In fact, violent incidents in California rose in the 1950s and 1960s, after courts declared restrictive covenants unenforceable.

Nationally, nonwhite school districts get

\$23 Billion LESS
than predominantly white districts

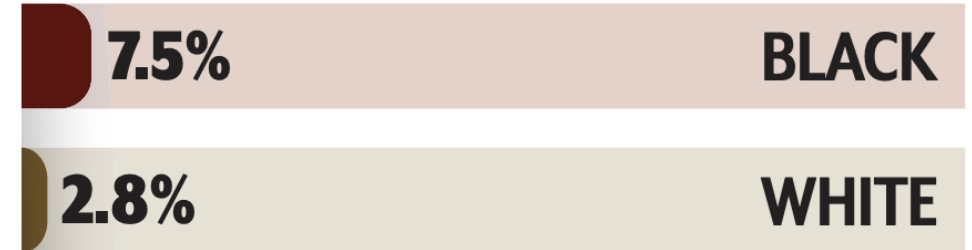
VI. Separate and Unequal Education

- **Nationally:** Through much of American history, enslavers and the white political ruling class in America falsely believed it was in their best interest to deny education to African Americans in order to dominate and control them.
- **California:** In the vast majority of California school districts, schools either re-segregated or were never integrated, and thus segregated schools persists today. California remains the sixth most segregated state in the country for Black students. In California's highly segregated schools, schools mostly attended by white and Asian children receive more funding and resources than schools with predominantly Black and Latino children.

VII. Racism in Environment and Infrastructure

- **Nationally:** Due to residential segregation, African Americans have lived in poor-quality housing throughout American history, exposing them to disproportionate amounts of lead poisoning and increasing risk of infectious disease.
- **California:** National patterns are replicated in California. Black Californians are more likely than white Californians to live in overcrowded housing, and near hazardous waste. Black neighborhoods are more likely to lack tree canopy and suffer from the consequences of water and air pollution.

AMERICANS LIVING IN SUBSTANDARD HOUSING



Compared to other Americans,
African Americans are

75% MORE LIKELY to live near hazardous waste or refining facilities

VIII. Pathologizing the Black Family

2019

AFRICAN AMERICANS
IN THE UNITED STATES

14%



BLACK CHILDREN IN
FOSTER CARE

23%

- **Nationally:** Government policies and practices—at all levels—have destroyed Black families throughout American history.
- **California:** California trends in the child welfare, juvenile justice and disciplinary action in schools match those in the rest of the country. Recent California Attorney General investigations have found several school districts punish Black students at higher rates than students of other races.

IX. Control Over Creative Cultural and Intellectual Life

- **Nationally:** During slavery, state governments controlled and dictated the forms and content of African American artistic and cultural production. After the Civil War, governments and politicians embraced minstrelsy, which was the popular and culture makers access to the leisure sites, business licenses, and funding for lifestyle activities that were offered to white people.
- **California:** In California, city governments decimated thriving Black neighborhoods with vibrant artistic communities, like the Fillmore in San Francisco. State-funded California museums have excluded Black art from their institutions. California has been home to numerous racist monuments and memorials for centuries.

COURTESY OF BETTMANN ARCHIVES VIA GETTY IMAGES



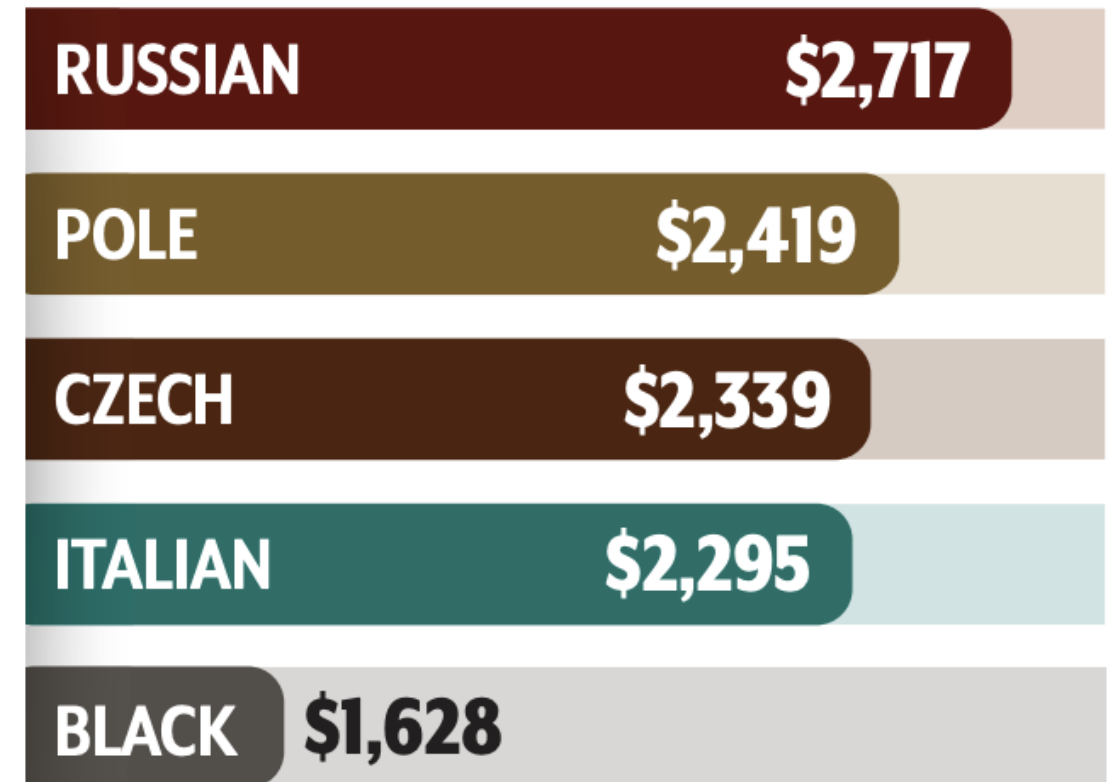
Little Richard protesting record companies over royalties. Little Richard sold the rights to the song "Tutti Fruity" for a reported \$50, and received half a cent for each record sold. "I was a dumb black kid and my mama had 12 kids and my daddy was dead," Little Richard reportedly said, "I wanted to help them, so I took whatever was offered." (1984)

X. Stolen Labor and Hindered Opportunity

- **Nationally:** It is undeniable that the labor of enslaved Africans built the infrastructure of the nation, produced its main agricultural products for domestic consumption and export, and filled the nation's coffers. Since then, federal, state, and local government actions directly segregated and discriminated against African Americans.
- **California:** Several California cities did not hire Black workers until the 1940s and certain public sectors continued to avoid hiring Black workers even in 1970. The San Francisco Fire Department, for example, had no Black firefighters before 1955 and, by 1970 when Black residents made up 14 percent of the city's population, only four of the Department's 1,800 uniformed firefighters were Black.

ANNUAL INCOME DURING GREAT MIGRATION

White immigrant workers verses Black workers



XI. An Unjust Legal System

- **Nationally:** American government at all levels criminalized African Americans for social control, and to maintain an economy based on exploited Black labor.
- **California:** Like the rest of the country, California stops, shoots, kills, and imprisons more African Americans than their share of the population.

African Americans are



to be killed by police

More than half of all killings by police in the U.S. go unreported in the USA National Vital Statistics System database from which some analysis is drawn.

88% increase
in **anti-Black** hate crimes
from 2019 to 2020



COURTESY OF *DISSECTION: PHOTOGRAPHS OF A RITE OF PASSAGE IN AMERICAN MEDICINE, 1880-1930*, PAGE 10



Students at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, 1898. The English sociologist Harrie Martineau wrote in 1838 that “...the bodies of coloured people exclusively are taken for dissection because the whites do not like it, and the coloured people cannot resist.”

XII. Mental and Physical Harm and Neglect

- **Nationally:** The government actions described in this report have had a devastating effect on the health of African Americans. Compared to white Americans, African Americans live shorter lives and are more likely to suffer and die from nearly all known diseases and medical conditions compared to white Americans.
- **California:** These national trends are similar in California. The life expectancy of an average Black Californian was 75.1 years, six years shorter than the state average.
- Black babies are more likely to die in infancy and Black mothers giving birth die at a rate of almost four times higher than the average Californian mother.
- Compared with white Californians, Black Californians are more likely to have diabetes, die from cancer, or be hospitalized for heart disease.

XIII. The Wealth Gap

- **Nationally:** Federal and California Homestead Acts essentially gave away hundreds of millions of acres of land almost for free mostly to white families. Today, as many as 46 million of their living descendants reap the wealth benefits, approximately one-quarter of the adult population of the United States.
- **California:** The wealth gap exists in similar ways in California. A 2014 study of the Los Angeles metro area found that the median value of liquid assets for native born African American households was **\$200**, compared to \$110,000 for white households, and \$72,000 for African Blacks.

In 2019, white households owned

9x  **MORE**

assets than Black households

Final Recommendations

Enslavement:

- **Create New State Agency: CA American Freedmen Affairs**
- Enact legislation to create compensation fund for all direct descendants of American slaves forced to labor specifically in the state of California (i.e. Descendant legacy families in Coloma, CA).

Mental and Physical Harm & Neglect:

- Establish and Fund Community Wellness Centers in Black Communities
- Fund Research to Study the Mental Health Issues within California's Black Youth Population, and to Address Rising Suicide Rates among Black Youth.

Unjust Legal System:

- Increase Efforts to Restore the Voting Rights of Formerly Incarcerated Persons and Provide Access to Those Who Are Currently Incarcerated and Eligible to Vote

Separate and Unequal Education:

- Increase Funding to Schools Through the Local Control Funding Formula to Address Racial Disparities

Housing Segregation:

- Provide Property Tax Relief to Descendants, Living in Formerly Redlined Neighborhoods, Who Purchase or Construct a New Home
- Provide Shared Appreciation Loans and Subsidized Down Payments, Mortgages, and Homeowner's Insurance

Pending Reparations Legislation

Enslavement:

SB 490 establishes the California American Freedman Affairs Agency within state government, outlining its structure, responsibilities, and oversight to provide genealogical support, strategic communications, community assistance, business support, financial management, cultural preservation, data analysis, civic engagement, legal counsel, and strategic partnerships for descendants of enslaved persons in California.

Mental and Physical Harm & Neglect:

AB 2064 seeks to establish and fund a grant program supporting community-driven solutions to decrease violence at family, school, and neighborhood levels in African American communities.

Unjust Legal System:

ACA 8 proposes amending the California Constitution to explicitly prohibit all forms of slavery and restrict involuntary servitude solely to punishment for crime, clarifying that slavery encompasses forced labor compelled through physical or legal coercion.

Separate and Unequal Education:

- **AB 1929** seeks to amend the Education Code by introducing provisions to require the collection of data on career technical education outcomes disaggregated by race, with a focus on increasing enrollment and success for descendants of slavery in STEM-related programs.
- **AB 3131** – California Career Technical Education Incentive Grant Program: Strong Workforce Program: priority for applicants in historically redlined communities.

Housing Segregation:

- **SB 1013** establishes the Property Tax Assistance for Descendants of Enslaved Persons Program, offering grants to eligible descendants of enslaved individuals residing in formerly redlined neighborhoods in California for property tax relief.
- **SB 1007** establishes a program to provide grants for homeownership support, including down payments, mortgage payments, and homeowner's insurance, to eligible descendants of enslaved individuals in California.

Pending Reparations Legislation - CLBC

Civil Rights

- **ACA 7 (Jackson)** – Amends the California Constitution to allow the State to fund programs for the purpose of increasing the life expectancy of, improving educational outcomes for, or lifting out of poverty specific groups.
- **ACR 135 (Weber) /SCR 113**– Formally recognizes and accepts responsibility for all of the harms and atrocities committed by representatives of the state who promoted, facilitated, enforced and permitted the institution of chattel slavery.
- **AB 1815 (Weber)** – Prohibit discrimination based on natural and protective hairstyles in all competitive sports by extending the CROWN Act to explicitly include competitive sports within California.
- **SB 1050 (Bradford)** – Property takings: Restore property taken during race-based uses of eminent domain to its original owners or provide another effective remedy where appropriate, such as restitution or compensation.
- **AB 3089 (Jones-Sawyer)** – Issues a formal apology for human rights violations and crimes against humanity on African slaves and their descendants.

Criminal Justice Reform

- **ACA 8 (Wilson)** – Amend the California Constitution to prohibit involuntary servitude for incarcerated persons.
- **AB 1986 (Bryan)** – Eliminate the CDCR practice of banning books without oversight and review.
- **AB 2064 (Jones-Sawyer)** – Fund community-driven solutions to decrease community violence at the family, school and neighborhood levels in African-American communities by establishing a state-funded grant program.
- **AB XXX (Holden)** – Mandela Act: Restricts solitary confinement within CDCR detention facilities.

Health

- **AB 1975 (Bonta)** – Make medically supportive food and nutrition interventions, when deemed medically necessary by healthcare providers, a permanent part of Medi-Cal benefits in California.
- **SB 1089 (Smallwood-Cuevas)** – Address food injustice by requiring advance notification to community stakeholders prior to the closure of a grocery store in underserved or at-risk communities.

Business

- **AB 2862 (Gipson)** – Eliminate barriers to licensure for people with criminal records. Expansion of AB 2138 to prioritize African American applicants seeking occupational licenses, especially those who are descendants.

Pending Reparations Legislation - CA Senator Steven Bradford

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- **SB 1007** establishes a program to provide grants for homeownership support, including down payments, mortgage payments, and homeowner's insurance, to eligible descendants of enslaved individuals in California.
- **SB 1331** establishes the Fund for Reparations and Restorative Justice, allocating 6% of transfers from the General Fund to the Special Fund for Economic Uncertainties to fund policies indemnifying African American descendants of chattel enslaved persons or free Black persons living in the US prior to the end of the 19th century.

STAY ENGAGED

Task Force Website: <https://oag.ca.gov/ab3121>

More Info: californiareparations.info

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Past Hearings: Search CA DOJ Reparations or ETM Media on Youtube

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