

6/4/02, 5/30/02

43-R-02

A RESOLUTION

Slave Reparations

WHEREAS, the 35 million African Americans currently in the United States are direct descendants of slaves brought to the New World beginning four hundred years ago; and

WHEREAS, untold millions of Africans perished from starvation, disease, and brutal treatment while being transported to the New World during centuries of a horrible black holocaust; and

WHEREAS, uncompensated slave labor was the primary source throughout the colonies and many of the early states for clearing and cultivating land, planting and harvesting crops, and providing artisinal products; and

WHEREAS, the use of uncompensated slave labor is one of the major cause for the rise of the U.S. as the strongest and wealthiest nation in the world; and

WHEREAS, uncompensated slave labor allowed slave owners and their families to accumulate great wealth that passed down to their descendants; and

WHEREAS, slavery was not abolished in the State of Illinois until 1848, and Black Laws first passed in 1819 denied African Americans the right to vote, barred African Americans from testifying against whites in court, withheld state welfare funds from African Americans, and required all African Americans to carry a pass certifying their free status; and

WHEREAS, the State of Illinois actively aided the institution of slavery by making it a felony to obstruct the recapture of escaped slaves, by advertising captured slaves, and by selling unclaimed slaves for a profit for terms of a year; and

WHEREAS, freed slaves first articulated the call for reparations in their immediate pursuit of land and resources to realize economic independence prior to the start of the Federal policies of Reconstruction; and

WHEREAS, the original Freedmen's Bureau Act of 1865 did propose assigning 40 acres of abandoned and confiscated land to freed slaves as reparation, but under President Andrew Johnson the terms of the act that became law in July 1866 actually restored the land to former white owners, many of them formerly accused of treason to the union; and

WHEREAS, freed slaves and their descendants have never received any compensation for the generations of labor expropriation, deprivation of freedom and rights, widespread injury and death, while making great contributions to the economic strength and security of this nation; and

WHEREAS, slave emancipation was followed by over one hundred years of legal segregation across the country that continued to deny the descendants of slaves the same basic rights and resources as the descendants of slaveholders, in particular, and those of European descent in general; and

WHEREAS, African American communities in Evanston and surrounding areas, including the City of Chicago, are in large part the product of interregional migration from the South, where slavery and its vestiges were most pronounced; and

WHEREAS, in Evanston, theaters, restaurants, hotels, and other public accommodations denied African American residents equal access and treatment until after World War II; and

WHEREAS, in Evanston, African American residents faced housing discrimination through racially restrictive covenants, Federal red lining practices, unequal access to sources of credit and steering practices on the part of realtors; and

WHEREAS, in Evanston, African American residents have faced education discrimination through unequal and underfunded facilities; and

WHEREAS, in Evanston, African American residents have suffered unequal access to health care for over a century, as a result of systematic exclusion from city hospitals; and

WHEREAS, in Evanston, African American residents have faced occupational discrimination due to the inequities in hiring, compensation, promotion, and retention within both private and public employment; and

WHEREAS, State Senator Donne Trotter has submitted to the Illinois legislature a resolution to form a Riot and Reparations Commission to study violent historical events, including the Springfield Race Riot of 1908, the East St. Louis Race Riot of 1917 and the Chicago Race Riot of 1919, that resulted in the loss of African American lives and property; and

WHEREAS, numerous cities and municipalities in the United States, including Baltimore, Maryland, Dallas, Texas, Chicago, Illinois, and the State of California, have passed resolutions urging the Federal Government to investigate the impact of slavery and make recommendations for reparations; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of Evanston has a tradition of issuing resolutions for Federal inquiry regarding state, national, and international concerns, including such issues as nuclear disarmament, U.S. sanctuary for persecuted peoples, the United Nations' presence in Somalia, and Avenue of the Righteous (those who risked their lives to save Jews during the Nazi Holocaust); and

WHEREAS, the United Nations World Conference Against Racism in Durban South Africa (September, 2001) declared the Transatlantic slave trade and slavery, crimes against humanity; and

WHEREAS, there have been efforts since emancipation to address the need to repair the harms and inequities resulting from slavery in the United States, which the call for reparations is a part of, but not the end of; and

WHEREAS, the extent and nature of the injuries and inequities resulting from slavery and segregation are so deeply rooted and wide-ranging that reparations ought to take many forms, including but not limited to efforts to insure African American access to jobs, health care, education and overall economic development,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EVANSTON, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS:

SECTION 1: That the Evanston City Council urges the U.S. House of Representatives to pass House Resolution 40 introduced by Representative John Conyers (D., Michigan), calling for a Federal Commission to study slavery and its vestiges, and to make recommendations for reparations.

SECTION 2: That the Evanston City Council calls on school districts 65 and 202 and on school districts throughout the state of Illinois to mandate comprehensive

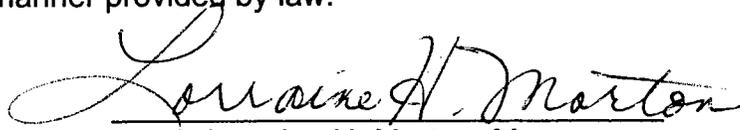
instruction on the history of slavery, the transatlantic slave trade, and the historical repercussions of these crimes against humanity.

SECTION 3: That the Evanston City Council calls on Northwestern University and other institutions of higher learning throughout the United States to establish avenues for researching the legacies of slavery and the slave trade in order to promote a greater understanding of these realities of American society.

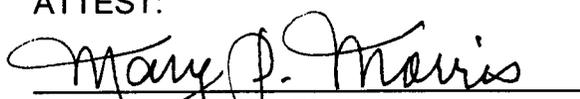
SECTION 4: That the Evanston City Council is determined to preserve Evanston as a diverse community and to safeguard equity for all of its residents.

SECTION 5: That a copy of this resolution be sent to the Illinois general assembly, to the U.S. Congress in general and to each of the representatives of the State of Illinois to the United States Congress.

SECTION 6: That this Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval in the manner provided by law.


Lorraine H. Morton, Mayor

ATTEST:


Mary P. Morris
City Clerk

Adopted: June 10, 2002

