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ACTION ALERT

DATE: May 28, 2014
TO: Concerned Parties
FROM: Hilary O. Shelton, Director, Washington Bureau

NAACP Supports Slavery Reparations Study Legislation, H.R. 40, Now Pending In The 113th Congress

**BILL SEEKS TO CREATE FEDERAL AGENCY TO STUDY EFFECTS OF THE INSTITUTION OF SLAVERY ON
AFRICAN AMERICANS AND TO APOLOGIZE FOR THE INJUSTICE, CRUELTY, BRUTALITY AND
INHUMANITY OF SLAVERY**

THE ISSUE:

Congressman John Conyers (D-MI) has again re-introduced **H.R. 40**; the formal title of this bill is to establish a “*Commission to Study the Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act*”. Specifically, this legislation, also known as the “**Reparations Act**” would establish a federal commission to review the institution of slavery, the resulting racial and economic discrimination against African Americans, and the impact of these forces on African Americans who are living today. The bill would also acknowledge the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality and inhumanity of slavery in the United States and the 13 colonies between 1619 and 1865 and make recommendations to help correct the residual effects of these acts.

The call for reparations received a boost earlier this year when an article appeared in the May 21, 2014, edition of the Atlantic written by Ta-Nehisi Coates entitled, “The Case for Reparations.” This article made an extremely effective case in support of reparations legislation.

While this legislation has consistently been a priority of the NAACP, it was, unfortunately, not acted upon by the 112th Congress (which ended in December, 2012). Not to be deterred, however, Congressman Conyers reintroduced H.R. 40 (he asks for, and is given, the same number every Congress) on January 3, 2013, the first day of the 113th Congress.

In our continuing effort to advocate for this legislation, the NAACP Washington Bureau is currently working with a few key members of the United States Senate to see a companion bill introduced in the Senate. If we are successful, this would be the first time reparations legislation has been introduced in the Senate and would represent a major step forward in our struggle to help pass this important legislation and for recognition and equality.

More...

THE ACTION WE NEED YOU TO TAKE:

Contact your Representative and both your Senators **and URGE THEM TO SUPPORT REPARATIONS LEGISLATION.** To contact your Senators and Representative, you may:

✓ **Make a Phone Call:**

Call your Senators and your Representative in Washington by dialing the Capitol Switchboard and asking to be transferred to your Senators'/Congressman's offices. The switchboard phone number is **(202) 224-3121** (see message section, below).

✓ **Write a Letter**

To write letters to your Senators, send them to:

The Honorable (name of Senator)
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

To write a letter to your Representative, send it to:

The Honorable (name of Representative)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

**A SAMPLE
LETTER IS
ATTACHED**

✓ **Send a Fax**

If you would like to send a fax, call your Senators' or Representative's offices (through the Capitol switchboard) and ask for their fax numbers (you can use either the attached sample letter or the message box, below).

✓ **Send an E-Mail**

To send an e-mail to your Senators, simply go to www.senate.gov, and click on "Contacting the Senate"; you can look your Senators up either alphabetically or by state. To send an e-mail to your Representative, go to www.house.gov, and click on "Write Your Representative." This will help you identify who your congressman is and how to contact him/her.

Unfortunately, not all Members of Congress have e-mail addresses.

REMEMBER TO CONTACT BOTH YOUR SENATORS!!!!

THE MESSAGE:

- ◆ The "Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act," would simply authorize a commission to explore the institution of slavery in America, its impact on current society, and to make recommendations to Congress for appropriate remedies.
- ◆ Passage of the bill would be an important first step in acknowledging the fundamental cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery in the United States, and help millions of Americans begin to heal emotional wounds that have festered for centuries.
- ◆ It is past time to acknowledge — and correct — the greatest injustice perpetuated by this nation in its history.
- ◆ Only by facing up to our past can we as a nation hope to fulfill our potential for the future.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS IMPORTANT MATTER!!!

If you have any questions, call Hilary Shelton at the Washington Bureau at (202) 463-2940.

MEMBERSHIP IS POWER! JOIN THE NAACP TODAY.

For more information, call your local NAACP branch or visit www.naacp.org

Sample

(date)

The Honorable _____
United States Senate / House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510 / 20515

RE: SUPPORT FOR REPARATIONS STUDY LEGISLATION

Dear Senator / Representative _____:

I am writing to let you know of my strong support of legislation that would establish a federal commission to study proposals of reparation for the black descendants of African slaves. Congressman Conyers has re-introduced this legislation in the House of Representatives (H.R. 40), and there is the potential that a companion bill will be dropped in the Senate later this year. This legislation is long overdue, and should be put into place this year. My hope is that as the 113th Congress gets underway, that you will sign on to this bill as a co-sponsor and do all that you can to ensure its enactment.

This legislation is an important first step in acknowledging the inherent cruelty, brutality and inhumanity of slavery as practiced in the United States, and would help millions of Americans begin to heal the subsequent emotional wounds that have been festering for centuries. In confronting the ugly legacy of slavery, the commission created by H.R. 40 would examine the impact slavery has had on the racial and economic inequalities still suffered today. The commission would also be charged with reviewing reparation proposals to help black Americans regain some of the stature stripped of their forefathers lost through no fault of their own and making recommendations on how we as a nation can best heal these wounds.

I hope that you will join me in strongly support H.R. 40 as well as the companion bill in the Senate. Please let me know your thoughts on this legislation, as well as what you intend to do to see that it is enacted in the 113th Congress, and what I may do to help.

Sincerely,

(sign and print your name, and
be sure to include your address)

***Remember to contact your
Representative and BOTH
your Senators.***