

Resolution 11: Creation of an Enslavement Era Redress Act

Sponsored by Rep. Sonya Harper, Illinois

Creation of an Enslavement Era Redress Act at the Federal and State Levels

WHEREAS, the institution of slavery in the United States represents one of the greatest atrocities in human history, involving the kidnapping, trafficking, forced labor, and inhumane treatment of millions of African people; and

WHEREAS, the economic foundation of this nation was built in no small part upon the labor and exploitation of enslaved persons, who were denied freedom, humanity, and dignity for generations; and

WHEREAS, the abolition of slavery did not erase its consequences, but rather gave way to an era of Black Codes, Jim Crow laws, racial terror, discriminatory practices in housing, employment, education, and healthcare, and systemic barriers that persist to this day; and

WHEREAS, the legacy of enslavement continues to reverberate in disparities in wealth, education, healthcare, incarceration, and political representation, creating inequities that disproportionately harm the descendants of enslaved persons; and

WHEREAS, justice requires not only acknowledgment of these harms but the enactment of meaningful redress, including economic, social, and cultural repair; and

WHEREAS, governments at every level—federal, state, and local—have the moral responsibility and the constitutional authority to enact policies that address historic wrongs and advance equity for all citizens; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive framework for redress must include transparency, accountability, and enforceable provisions to ensure that corporations, institutions, and governments that benefitted from enslavement disclose their involvement and contribute to reparative measures; and

WHEREAS, such a framework must also provide for the creation of funds dedicated to repairing the harms of enslavement, through investments in affordable housing, quality education, healthcare access, business development, and community revitalization programs designed to benefit descendants of enslaved persons; and

WHEREAS, descendants and their communities must be central to the process, with opportunities for public hearings, community input, and direct participation in the design and oversight of reparative initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of an Enslavement Era Redress Act at both the federal and state levels would represent an historic step toward truth, reconciliation, and justice, while advancing the unfinished work of democracy and equality in the United States;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women (NOBEL Women) calls upon the United States Congress, the President of the United States, and all

state legislatures to immediately consider, draft, and enact an **Enslavement Era Redress Act**, establishing a comprehensive and enforceable framework for reparative justice; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Act shall include mandatory corporate and institutional disclosure of past involvement in slavery, enforceable requirements for financial redress, the establishment of dedicated Redress Funds, and the creation of oversight bodies to ensure transparency, compliance, and accountability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Act shall require public hearings and community engagement to honor the voices of descendants of enslaved persons, and to foster truth, dignity, and healing; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that governments enacting this Act shall issue formal findings acknowledging the role of slavery in shaping present-day inequities and shall issue a formal apology to the descendants of enslaved persons; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, members of Congress, governors, state legislative leader, and relevant agencies at all levels of government, as a clear and urgent call to action to repair the enduring harms of slavery and to advance the cause of justice for African Americans.

Submitted by Rep. Sonya Harper, Illinois