

The United States African American Restoration Act



THE US AFRICAN AMERICAN RESTORATION ACT (USAARA)

As did the Hebrew slaves of Egypt, enslaved Africans once prayed to God for justice and emancipation from the cruelty of chattel slavery in America. The "Emancipation Proclamation", issued by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863, and the passage of The Thirteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution in 1865, were the answers to those prayers. Nearly a century later, on August 28, 1963, at the Great March on Washington, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC and affirmed that **"One hundred years later, the Negro is still not free"**. That afternoon, Dr. King delivered his iconic "I Have A Dream" sermon before a crowd of 250,00 demonstrators and the world. His words were vessels of faith and hope for Blacks in America that their prayers for justice, equality, and true freedom would someday be answered. —That, like the Hebrews crossing into Canaan, they too would one day enter a Promised Land.

Nearly 60 years later, African Americans still plead, "Black Lives Matter", "I Can't Breathe," "Hands Up—Don't Shoot," and "We Shall Overcome." No matter the sustained cruelty, injustice, humiliation, and indignity they suffer in America, they continue to hope and pray to God. —And as always, God is still listening.

RESTORATION

In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr: ***"We must come to see that the roots of racism are very deep in our country, and there must be something positive and massive in order to get rid of all the effects of racism and the tragedies of racial injustice."*** Experts the world over agree that education is the proven solution to eradicating poverty and reducing crime. It is also the key to the cultural, economic, social, and political survival, equality, and prosperity of Blacks in America.

African Americans are not a broken people in need of *reparation*; they are abused, neglected, distressed, and oppressed people in need of *restoration*. To survive and prosper like any thriving culture or civilization, Blacks in America must build their futures on a deeply embedded foundation of high-quality education. -Something that has been legally and systematically denied them since being abducted from Africa in 1619. This truth is self-evident and requires no study to affirm it. The devastating generational byproducts of slavery in America are well documented.

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They have resulted in crippling cultural, economic, emotional, and psychological damage to the descendants of those once-thriving Africans, who were kidnapped and enslaved for profit. The aftereffects of slavery in America have now manifested themselves into cancerous racial polarization and profound damage to the overall psychological well-being of the country.

According to the US Bureau of Justice Statistics, the malignant vestiges of Slavery, Jim Crow Laws, Mass Incarceration and Institutional Racism in the US, have metastasized into the five-to-one ratio of Black men incarcerated in America, over that of Caucasian men. And although countless studies have proven that Black Americans do not commit more crimes than do White Americans, due to rampant racism and institutionalized racial profiling by police, Blacks are still arrested and incarcerated in far greater numbers than White Americans. The disproportionate mass incarcerations of Blacks continue to destroy and constrain their lives and futures long after slavery was abolished. One would think that these empirical facts would be sufficient to cause America to do right by African Americans, but as is disturbingly clear, it is not.

In a 2014 study published in the journal of "Psychological Science", Stanford University researchers Rebecca Hetey and Jennifer Eberhardt found that "White participants who were exposed to higher racial disparities in incarceration rates reported being more afraid of crime and more likely to support the kinds of punitive policies that exacerbate these racial disparities". In other words, presenting studies and statistics *proving* that African Americans always have and are still suffering race-based hatred, discrimination, and abuse, not only does not *solve* the problem for Blacks in America, it likely makes matters worse. According to the Stanford study, after being informed that Blacks are unjustly locked up five times as often as Whites, instead of demonstrating outrage and compassion, many White Americans studied, supported harsher punishment for Blacks.

This study might explain why the late US Congressman John Conyers' so-called Reparations Bill -"H.R.40 - Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African- Americans Act" after more than 30 years since he first proposed it, has never even been put up to a congressional vote. Congressman Conyers' bill simply sought to secure a budget to establish a commission, which would examine the institution and impact of slavery on American Blacks and "recommend appropriate remedies". As the Stanford study strongly suggests, however, providing statistics of Black lynching in America, increases rope sales.

It is perhaps then-Republican Presidential candidate Donald J. Trump's own words—a man who has openly discriminated against Blacks all of his life, that best illustrate the scorn with which far too many Americans still hold African Americans. In an attempt to woo African American voters during his 2016 presidential campaign, Trump infamously declared:

"What do you have to lose by trying something new like Trump? What do you have to lose? You live in your poverty, your schools are no good, you have no jobs, 58 percent of your youth is unemployed. What the hell do you have to lose?"

Not surprisingly, uninspired by Trump's proposition, 92 percent of American Blacks voted against him in the 2016 Presidential election. Nonetheless, Donald J. Trump was elected the 45th President of the United States. But if a known racist like Donald J. Trump can be elected President *without* the Black vote, unless a massive and positive change is realized, the future of

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Blacks in America is bleak. But there is good news. The answer to this problem has been right in front of us all along.

Admission of Guilt

In 2009, six months following the election of President Barack Obama, United States Senator Tom Harkin—a White man—successfully passed a bill that, on behalf of America, admitted to the evils and vestiges of slavery and apologized to Blacks. In presenting this bill to Congress, Senator Harkin stated the following:

"While the reconstruction amendments, the 13th amendment banning slavery, the 14th amendment granting full citizenship to all slaves, and the 15th amendment guaranteeing the right to vote supposedly signaled equality for all, widespread oppression continued. [Through] Jim Crow laws, African Americans were denied voting rights, denied employment opportunities, denied access to public accommodations, denied entry into military service, denied criminal justice protections, denied housing, denied education, denied police protection, denied due process. In short, denied their very humanity. "Not until the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and other federal protections did legal -- legal -- segregation effectively cease in this country. The destructive effects of both slavery and Jim Crow, remain, however. As President Bush noted, 'the racial bigotry did not end with slavery.' President Clinton stated that the racial divide is 'America's constant curse.' Today many African Americans remained mired in poverty. Average incomes remain below that of white Americans. There remains an achievement gap in education and, for many, health conditions. African Americans bear a disproportionate burden of disease and injury and death and disability. African- Americans are moreover disproportionately involved with the criminal justice system in our prisons."

Atonement and Contrition

As a meaningful and long-overdue gesture of atonement and contrition for what the New York Times has called "America's Original Sin", I propose that the United States Congress must pass "The US AFRICAN AMERICAN RESTORATION ACT" (USAARA). Once passed, the USAARA will, without prejudice, provide to African Americans—regardless of economic status or criminal background—FULL postsecondary and or vocational scholarship vouchers for tuition, books, materials, housing, and meals. No direct cash disbursements will be made to any USAARA recipient.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Who will pay for these benefits?

The answer is; they have already been paid for with the blood, the sweat, the tears, and the very lives of the untold millions of Africans kidnapped, enslaved, and abused in America. People whose lives and unpaid labor was used to enrich, empower, and erect America into the tower of industry and innovation it is today. The value of that toil, the murder, rape, torture, and abuse levied against African American slaves and their descendants is immeasurable. With the

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enactment of this federal legislation, the descendants of African American slaves, will at long last, possess the tools necessary to build a stable and prosperous future for themselves and their descendants.

What will it cost?

Have you ever asked yourself this question when seeing the police putting an African American youth into the back of a patrol car? Have you ever stopped your car and demanded that they let the young man go to save you tax dollars? Consider that according to a College Board report, for the 2018/19 academic years, the average overall cost for tuition, fees, room, and board to attend an in-state public college in America was \$21,950. By comparison, according to the US Bureau of Justice Statistics, the average annual taxpayer cost in America of housing a prisoner is \$31,286 per inmate with some states such as New York, as high as \$60,000 per year—per inmate. One year at New Jersey's Princeton University costs \$37,000, while one year at a New Jersey State prison costs taxpayers \$44,000.

Countless studies have concluded that education drastically reduces crime, recidivism, and poverty rates. If passed, this historic legislation will, among other things, actually save taxpayers billions of dollars annually by providing African Americans with the educational resources they need to OVERCOME—not just get by. —Resources, which have been historically and legally denied to them since first stepping—foot, and shackle—onto American soil. These educational benefits will free American Blacks from systemic and generational cycles of economic and social poverty. They are essential to restoring all African Americans to their pre-slavery place of cultural stability, relevance, productivity, prosperity, and self-sustainability. These building blocks of any successful civilization were systematically stripped from American Blacks through slavery and denied through the legalized abuse, oppression, hatred, and discrimination of Jim Crow Laws and institutional racism.

FREE LUNCH?

The US African American Restoration Act by no means constitutes a "free lunch". The word "free" is unsuitable to describe these educational dispensations. The USAARA is a gesture of atonement. As previously mentioned, quality education for all African Americans must be considered an entitlement, having already been PAID IN FULL by the blood, sweat, tears, and lives of their enslaved ancestors. That said, this program will mandate a full and sustained scholastic commitment from every recipient. To qualify for USAARA educational vouchers, recipients must attend class and achieve passing grades for the federal funds to be disbursed to the academic institution.

Conclusion

There is no downside here. Those that would argue against Blacks procuring unencumbered, unrestricted access to quality education, are not part of the problem; they *are* the problem? This legislation is long overdue and to succeed, must be supported by Americans of all races. Those in favor must and will employ all legal means necessary to compel a bipartisan congressional coalition, as elected and paid servants of the American people, to sponsor and sign the US

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AFRICAN AMERICAN RESTORATION ACT into law. In doing so, America can finally close the darkest chapter in its history and truly earn the right to represent itself as "the land of the free and the home of the brave". For African Americans, education is and has always been the key to the gates of the "Promised Land". There can be no further obstacles standing in the way of the fulfillment of this dream.

In the words of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr:

"The Negro has no room to make any substantial compromises because his store of advantages is too small. He must press unrelentingly for quality, integrated education or his whole drive for freedom will be undermined by the absence of a most vital and indispensable element—learning. "

In the words of Frederick Douglass:

"If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, or it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will."

And in the words of James Madison:

"Knowledge will forever govern ignorance: And a people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives."

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