

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL

June 4, 2024

Continuing the Work of Reparations in Los Angeles County

Our government institutions, including the County of Los Angeles (County), have been explicit and intentional in curating the systemic racism that continues to plague our society today. With our history of legalized racism – including but not limited to redlining, housing discrimination, workforce discrimination, and school segregation – our current government needs to act just as resolutely to provide true reparations to historically disenfranchised Black County residents.

To make tangible amends, it is not enough for the County to acknowledge its historical wrongdoings and systemic harm perpetuated against the African American community. On July 21, 2020, the County Board of Supervisors unanimously adopted a bold motion that not only committed the County to being an anti-racist entity, but also created the Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative that seeks to remove racism that systemically and systematically affects Black residents. The County must also develop a framework to provide families displaced by racist policies with ample and substantial resources to address the harmful effects of eminent domain through reparations.

In June 2023, pursuant to Assembly Bill 3121, the California Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans (Reparations Task Force)

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released its final report (Report). With more than 115 recommendations, the Report provides valuable guidance for the County to do its part of this important work. Included are recommendations to the Legislature for numerous policy changes directed at redressing each and every aspect of the atrocities perpetrated against African Americans including a formal apology and a standard curriculum to help make the history of African Americans and the Reparations Task Force's findings and recommendations accessible to people of all ages. In identifying methodologies for calculating reparations payments, the Report distinguishes particular reparations (for particular loss or injury to individuals) and cumulative compensation (for broader and longstanding moral damage for which direct restitution is impossible), and recommends that the latter be available for a "community of eligibility" consisting of "African American descendants of a chattel enslaved person, or descendants of a free African American person living in the United States prior to the end of the 19th Century".

Efforts are currently underway to transform the Report's recommendations into real policy change. In January 2024, the California Legislative Black Caucus introduced a package of 14 bills advancing reparations across a wide range of issues, including criminal justice reforms, property rights, education, civil rights, and food justice. These proposals include Senate Bill 1403 (Bradford), which will establish the California American Freedmen Affairs Agency to, among other things, verify the eligibility of potential reparations claimants. Senate Bill 1403 is still being considered in the State legislature and has passed its house of origin. As a broader architecture continues to take shape, the County must be proactive in preparing to play its role in the future system and developing a County framework to intentionally repair past harm.

Another important step the County must take is issuing a formal apology reckoning with its past and ongoing responsibility for moral, physical and dignitary harms, and commit to repairing them. Other jurisdictions in California, such as the City of Santa Monica and the San Francisco County Board of Supervisors, have already made such formal apologies.

Finally, this Juneteenth, as a small token of the County's commitment to the hard but necessary work of reparations, the County can provide to the "community of eligibility" free access to key County assets, such as beaches and museums, that they historically

have been excluded from.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Direct the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), through the Executive Director of Racial Equity for the Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative, to consult with each County department and any other parties that ARDI deems appropriate to review the Final Report of the California Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans (Report) and report back to the Board in writing within 120 days with:

- a. Actions that each County department can take or initiate within the 6 months following the report back to provide reparations to County residents consistent with the Report, including but not limited to residents of the class that the Report recommends should be eligible for cumulative compensation¹ (“Community of Eligibility Residents”); and
- b. Proposed language for a Board resolution that i) acknowledges and apologizes to African Americans and their descendants on behalf of the County and the County’s role in structural racism, acts of violence, and other such harms (including but not limited to those described in the Report) and ii) recommits the County to ending the ongoing harms resulting from these past actions. The resolution should:
 - i. Be developed using a robust community engagement strategy and in consultation with the affected communities (including individuals with lived experience) and established or recognized experts in civil rights, racial justice, history, and other relevant fields;
 - ii. Recognize and affirm the County’s responsibility for all harms and atrocities it has committed its active participation and facilitation of chattel slavery and its enduring legacy from which the systemic structures of racism and discrimination have come to exist; and

¹ The Report defines the class eligible for cumulative compensation as “African American descendants of a chattel enslaved person, or descendants of a free African American person living in the United States prior to the end of the 19th Century.” Chapter 17. *The California Reparations Report* (June 2023).

- iii. Commit to additional specific County actions that restore dignity and repair harm of affected peoples.
2. Further direct the CEO, through ARDI, to report back to the Board in writing within 180 days on potential additional County actions to provide reparations consistent with the Report, incorporating best practices from other local, state, federal and international efforts, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Establishing a framework for a policy to prioritize housing for those whose descendants were displaced from their homes in Los Angeles County;
 - b. A framework for financial restitution to individuals who have suffered particular injuries;
 - c. A study of best practices in providing monetary reparations with recommendations on a sustainable source of funding including a review of current or future specialized taxes, Federal, state, and local grants, and philanthropic sources;
 - d. Targeted support for economic empowerment and wealth-building, including technical assistance to access grant and loan funding for those who have been harmed, and waived permitting fees for Black-owned businesses; and
 - e. Assessment of all County services or facilities for which a fee is charged and identification of which may be appropriate to waive.
3. Further direct the CEO, through ARDI and in collaboration with the Center for Strategic Partnerships, to identify and pursue philanthropic resources to support the work set forth in Directives 1 and 2.
4. Adopt the findings of the Report (pp. 16-17) in support of its recommendations for reparations, and further find that extending access to Community of Eligibility Residents to County assets from which they historically have been excluded, which advances the County's commitment to addressing racial discrimination by government, serves a direct and substantial public purpose.

5. Direct the Natural History Museum, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Department of Beaches and Harbors, and other relevant Departments to, in coordination with ARDI, provide free access for one day on or about, and in celebration of, Juneteenth 2024, to appropriate facilities (such as museums and beach parking) for Community of Eligibility Residents who self-attest to their eligibility in writing and register with the County for formal confirmation of eligibility through a future local or state-run process.

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(JY/JM/CT/IG)