

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7927

To establish a Commission on Land Reparations, whose purpose is to study and distribute land reparations to African-American descendants of slaves promised land by the Federal Government.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 12, 2026

Mr. THANEDAR introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To establish a Commission on Land Reparations, whose purpose is to study and distribute land reparations to African-American descendants of slaves promised land by the Federal Government.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Land Reparations
5 Commission Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Following the Civil War, former enslaved
2 Black Americans were promised “40 acres and a
3 mule” of confiscated Confederate land by the Gov-
4 ernment through General Sherman’s Field Order 15,
5 which was never truly fulfilled, as Black Americans
6 who were provided land by the Government following
7 the Civil War had their land stripped away by Presi-
8 dent Andrew Johnson.

9 (2) Following the Civil War, the 39th Congress
10 passed H.R. 613, “An Act to establish a Bureau for
11 relief of Freedman and Refugees”. In section 5 of
12 that bill, it is stated that the established Bureau can
13 “...reserve from sale or settlement under the home-
14 stead or preemption laws, and assign for the use of
15 the freedmen and loyal refugees, male or female, un-
16 occupied public lands in Florida, Mississippi, Ala-
17 bama, Louisiana, and Arkansas...”.

18 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to estab-
19 lish a commission to study and develop land reparation
20 proposals for African Americans as a result of—

21 (1) the institution of slavery, including both the
22 Trans-Atlantic and the domestic “trade” which ex-
23 isted from 1565 in colonial Florida and from 1619
24 through 1865 within the other colonies that became
25 the United States, and which included the Federal

1 and State Governments that constitutionally and
2 statutorily supported the institution of slavery; and
3 (2) the failure of previously proposed remedi-
4 ations to address the unkept promise of land to pre-
5 viously enslaved Americans upon the abolition of
6 slavery in 1865.

7 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

8 In this Act:

9 (1) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission”
10 means the Commission on Land Reparations estab-
11 lished under this Act.

12 (2) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.—The term “eligi-
13 ble individuals” means individuals described as “per-
14 sons heretofore held in slavery in the United States,
15 or their descendants” in section 5 of the Act entitled
16 “An Act to incorporate the Freedman’s Savings and
17 Trust Company” (13 Stat. 511), including those en-
18 titled to receive benefits from reparations under such
19 Act or Special Field Orders No. 15 issued by Gen-
20 eral W.T. Sherman in January 1865.

21 **SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT AND DUTIES.**

22 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the
23 legislative branch the Commission on Land Reparations.

24 (b) DUTIES.—The Commission shall perform the fol-
25 lowing duties:

1 (1) Identify eligible individuals.

2 (2) Establish a process by which identified eligi-
3 ble individuals are to be informed of their suspected
4 eligibility, and by which applicants who believe them-
5 selves eligible for land reparations can apply and
6 have their eligibility assessed.

7 (3) Identify and procure suitable land, as deter-
8 mined by the Commission, from among Federal
9 lands, repossessed properties, unowned land, and
10 municipal land banks.

11 (4) Determine appropriate compensation for eli-
12 gible individuals in the form of either a subsidy for
13 suitable lands or a one-time cash payment.

14 (5) Submit a written report of its findings and
15 recommendations to the Congress not later than the
16 date which is 18 months after the date of the first
17 meeting of the full Commission pursuant to section
18 5(f).

19 **SEC. 5. MEMBERSHIP.**

20 (a) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—

21 (1) MEMBERSHIP.—The Commission shall be
22 composed of 15 members including the Chair, who
23 shall be appointed as follows:

1 (A) POLITICALLY APPOINTED MEMBERS.—

2 Not later than 60 days after the date of enact-
3 ment of this Act:

4 (i) One member shall be appointed by
5 the President.

6 (ii) Two members shall be appointed
7 by the House Majority Leader, in consulta-
8 tion with the committee of jurisdiction of
9 the House.

10 (iii) Two members shall be appointed
11 by the House Minority Leader, in consulta-
12 tion with the committee of jurisdiction of
13 the House.

14 (iv) Two members shall be appointed
15 by the Senate Majority Leader, in con-
16 sultation with the committee of jurisdiction
17 of the Senate.

18 (v) Two members shall be appointed
19 by the Senate Minority Leader, in con-
20 sultation with the committee of the juris-
21 diction of the Senate.

22 (B) SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS.—Not
23 later than 60 days after the appointment of the
24 Chair under section 5(e), six members, who
25 shall be individuals appointed by the Chair, and

1 approved by a majority of the members ap-
2 pointed under subparagraph (A). Such individ-
3 uals shall be from the major civil society and
4 reparations organizations that have historically
5 championed the cause of reparatory justice.

6 (2) QUALIFICATION.—All members of the Com-
7 mission shall be persons who are especially qualified
8 to serve on the Commission by virtue of their edu-
9 cation, training, activism or experience, particularly
10 in the field of African-American studies and
11 reparatory justice.

12 (3) LIMITATION.—No person who is a member
13 of Congress or an officer or employee of the Federal
14 Government or any State or local government may
15 serve as a member of the Commission, with the ex-
16 ception of those employed as full-time faculty at
17 State-funded colleges or universities.

18 (b) TERMS.—The term of office for members shall
19 be for the life of the Commission.

20 (c) QUORUM.—Seven members of the Commission
21 shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number may hold
22 hearings.

23 (d) VACANCIES.—A vacancy on the Commission
24 shall—

1 (1) not affect the powers of the Commission;
2 and

3 (2) be filled in the same manner in which the
4 original appointment was made.

5 (e) CHAIR.—There shall be a Chair of the Commis-
6 sion selected, from among the 9 politically appointed mem-
7 bers described in subsection (a)(1)(A), jointly by the Ma-
8 jority Leader of the Senate and the Majority Leader of
9 the House of Representatives, in consultation with the
10 committees of jurisdiction. The term of office shall be for
11 the life of the Commission.

12 (f) INITIAL MEETING OF FULL COMMISSION.—The
13 Chair shall call an initial meeting of the full Commission
14 not later than 45 days after the appointment of all mem-
15 bers under subsection (a)(1).

16 **SEC. 6. POWERS OF THE COMMISSION.**

17 (a) HEARINGS AND EVIDENCE.—The Commission
18 may, for purposes of carrying out this Act—

19 (1) hold hearings, sit and act at times and
20 places, take testimony, receive evidence, and admin-
21 ister oaths; and

22 (2) require, by subpoena or otherwise, the at-
23 tendance and testimony of witnesses and the produc-
24 tion of books, records, correspondence, memoranda,
25 papers, and documents.

1 (b) SUBPOENAS.—

2 (1) SERVICE.—Subpoenas issued under this
3 section may be served by any person designated by
4 the Commission.

5 (2) ENFORCEMENT.—

6 (A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of contu-
7 macy or failure to obey a subpoena issued
8 under this section, the United States district
9 court for the judicial district in which the sub-
10 poenaed person resides, is served, or may be
11 found, or where the subpoena is returnable,
12 may issue an order requiring such person to ap-
13 pear at any designated place to testify or to
14 produce documentary or other evidence. Any
15 failure to obey the order of the court may be
16 punished by the court as a contempt of that
17 court.

18 (B) ADDITIONAL ENFORCEMENT.—Sec-
19 tions 102 through 104 of the Revised Statutes
20 of the United States (2 U.S.C. 192 through
21 194) shall apply in the case of any failure of
22 any witness to comply with any subpoena or to
23 testify when summoned under the authority of
24 this section.

1 (C) ISSUANCE.—A subpoena may be issued
2 under this section only—

3 (i) by the agreement of the Chair; or

4 (ii) by the affirmative vote of a major-
5 ity of the Commission, a majority being
6 present.

7 (c) CONTRACTING.—To the extent or in amounts pro-
8 vided in Appropriations acts, and subject to the applicable
9 laws and regulations, the Commission may enter into con-
10 tracts with government entities, private entities, or per-
11 sons for goods or services, including for conducting re-
12 search or surveys, the preparation of reports, and other
13 activities necessary for the discharge of the duties of the
14 Commission.

15 (d) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES AND
16 OTHER ENTITIES.—The Commission may secure directly
17 from any department, agency, bureau, board, commission,
18 office, independent establishment, or instrumentality of
19 the United States any information related to any inquiry
20 of the Commission conducted under this Act, including in-
21 formation of a confidential nature (which the Commission
22 shall maintain in a secure manner). Each such depart-
23 ment, agency, bureau, board, commission, office, inde-
24 pendent establishment, or instrumentality shall furnish
25 such information directly to the Commission upon request.

1 (e) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES.—Upon
2 the request of the Commission—

3 (1) the Administrator of General Services shall
4 provide to the Commission, on a reimbursable basis,
5 the administrative support services necessary for the
6 Commission to carry out its responsibilities under
7 this Act; and

8 (2) other Federal departments and agencies
9 may provide to the Commission any administrative
10 support services as may be determined by the head
11 of such department or agency to be advisable and
12 authorized by law.

13 (f) DONATIONS OF GOODS AND SERVICES.—The
14 Commission may accept, use, and dispose of gifts or dona-
15 tions of services or property.

16 (g) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Commission may use
17 the United States mails in the same manner and under
18 the same conditions as departments and agencies of the
19 United States.

20 (h) POWERS OF SUBCOMMITTEES, MEMBERS, AND
21 AGENTS.—Any subcommittee, member, or agent of the
22 Commission may, if authorized by the Commission, take
23 any action which the Commission is authorized to take by
24 this section.

1 **SEC. 7. ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS.**

2 (a) STAFF.—The may appoint additional personnel,
3 as may be necessary, to enable the Commission to carry
4 out its functions.

5 (b) APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN CIVIL SERVICE
6 LAWS.—The Chair and staff of the Commission may be
7 appointed without regard to the provisions of title 5,
8 United States Code, governing appointments in the com-
9 petitive service, and may be paid with out regard to the
10 provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53
11 of such title relating to classification and General Schedule
12 pay rates, except that no rate of pay fixed under this para-
13 graph may exceed the equivalent of that payable for a po-
14 sition at level V of the Executive Schedule under section
15 5316 of title 5, United States Code. Any individual ap-
16 pointed under this section shall be treated as an employee
17 for purposes of chapters 63, 81, 83, 84, 85, 87, 89, 89A,
18 89B, and 90 of that title.

19 (c) DETAILEES.—Any Federal Government employee
20 may be detailed to the Commission without reimbursement
21 from the Commission, and such detailee shall retain the
22 rights, status, and privileges of his or her regular employ-
23 ment without interruption.

24 (d) CONSULTANT SERVICES.—The Commission is au-
25 thorized to procure the services of experts and consultants
26 in accordance with section 3109 of title 5, United States

1 Code, but at rates not to exceed the daily rate paid a per-
2 son occupying a position at level IV of the Executive
3 Schedule under section 5315 of title 5, United States
4 Code.

5 (e) COMPENSATION AND TRAVEL EXPENSES.—

6 (1) COMPENSATION.—Each member of the
7 Commission may be compensated at a rate not to
8 exceed the daily equivalent of the annual rate of
9 basic pay in effect for a position at level IV of the
10 Executive Schedule under section 5315 of title 5,
11 United States Code, for each day during which that
12 member is engaged in the actual performance of the
13 duties of the Commission.

14 (2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—While away from
15 their homes or regular places of business in the per-
16 formance of services for the Commission, members
17 of the Commission shall be allowed travel expenses,
18 including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in the
19 same manner as persons employed intermittently in
20 the Government service are allowed expenses under
21 section 5703(b) of title 5, United States Code.

22 (f) NONAPPLICABILITY OF FEDERAL ADVISORY COM-
23 MITTEE ACT.—The Federal Advisory Committee Act (5
24 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the Commission.

1 **SEC. 8. TERMINATION.**

2 The Commission shall terminate 90 days after the
3 date on which the Commission submits its report to the
4 Congress under section 4(b)(e).

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