



**Crownsville Memorial Park
Public Hearing
May 16, 2024**

Written Letter of Support for the Recommendations by “Crownsville Caretakers United”

The American Descendants of Slavery Advocacy Foundation (ADOSAF) is a national grassroots advocacy organization with statewide Chapters across the nation. Its mission is to secure lineage-based reparations for descendants of U.S. chattel slavery from the federal government and to advocate for a transformative Black agenda.ⁱ The ADOSAF – Maryland Chapter writes this letter in support of the recommendations by the “*Crownsville Caretakers United*,” a collective of former Black patients who are mostly American descendants of slavery (ADOS), their descendants, and the mostly Black ADOS staff for the use of the 500-acre+ land at Crownsville, the former segregated, mental health “Hospital for the Negro Insane of Maryland.”

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The book by Antonia Hylton, “Madness: Race and Insanity in a Jim Crow Asylum,” highlighted the atrocities and brutality endured by Black (mostly ADOS)ⁱⁱ people who were detained at the facility from 1910-2004. This book was revelatory for the State of Maryland and the nation. It underscores the persistent injustices and abuses that ADOS people have suffered for generations without redress and visibility.

As Anne Arundel County pushes forward in its process to develop a master plan for the Crownsville Memorial Park, “*a place of healing for all*,” as voiced by County Executive Stuart Pittman in December 2023 regarding the use of the 500+ acre property, what is glaringly absent is centering and uplifting the voices of those who suffered the grave injustices that occurred at the hands of white Crownsville medical staff, Anne Arundel County, and the State of Maryland. The public hearings, developed for “community” input, have been identified by Anne Arundel County as part of the process for development of the master plan. During these hearings, the voices of those impacted by the County/State-sanctioned Crownsville abuse are overshadowed by the blaring voices of environmental groups, animal, and bicycle enthusiasts who fail to take a second seat to the group that should be centered - the former Black (mostly ADOS) patients and



staff, and the descendants of the patients. While the public hearings give voice to “*all*” residents of Anne Arundel County, “*all*” residents were not harmed by the barbarous acts at Crownsville by employees of Anne Arundel County or the State of Maryland. They nor their family members were slaved or suffered grievous injury and abuse that ended in death. It was the Black, mostly ADOS families that were impacted by these callous injustices, that, undoubtedly affected the economic and social condition of their families for generations.

Consequently, the County Executive’s vision for Crownsville should be anchored in a *reparative justice frame* that centers the voices and recommendations of the “*Crownsville Caretakers United*.” Without anchoring in a reparative justice framework, Anne Arundel County will intensify the injustice at Crownsville and continue the legacy of injury afflicted upon ADOS communities without redress.

Therefore, ADOSAF – Maryland Chapter urges Anne Arundel County to center the voices of the “*Crownsville Caretakers United*” and supports their recommendations.

Sincerely,

ADOSAF – Maryland Chapter
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ⁱ <https://www.adosfoundation.org/mission-statement/> Last accessed May 13, 2024.

ⁱⁱ An ADOS person is defined as someone who must: “1) Be a citizen of the United States of America and have identified as Negro, Colored, Black, or African American throughout their life on government documentation; 2) Present a government-issued ID, birth certificate, or census record identifying a *direct ancestor* as Negro, Colored, Black, or African American before 1965; and 3) [Can] trace their ancestry to at least one person that identified as Negro, Colored, Black, or who was an enslaved person in the United States between 1776 – 1865.”

<https://www.adosfoundation.org/ados-reparations-faqs/> Last accessed May 15, 2024.

Black people who descend from chattel slavery in this country were 99.9 percent of the country prior to 1965. According to data compiled by the Pew Research Center from the Census and American Community Surveys, Black people who are non-ADOS were a slither of the Black population in this country prior to 1965. See [Pew Research Center data](#). Last accessed April 29, 2024. Hamilton, Tod. “Immigration and the Remaking of Black America,” page 14, chart 2.8 *Black Immigrants as a Proportion of all blacks Living in the United States, 1960 – 2014*. See [Over half of Black immigrants arrived in U.S. after 2000 | Pew Research Center](#). Last accessed April 29, 2024.