



**American Descendants of Slavery Advocacy Foundation
Maryland State Chapter**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ADOS Advocacy Foundation's Maryland Chapter Applauds Legislature for Championing
Reparations Study While Expressing Profound Disappointment in Governor Moore's Veto
of SB 587, Undermining Commitment to Justice and Agency**

The American Descendants of Slavery (ADOS) Advocacy Foundation's Maryland Chapter first extends its deepest gratitude and enthusiastic applause to the **Maryland General Assembly** for the historic passage of Senate Bill 587. This legislation, which would have established the Maryland Reparations Commission, represented a "momentous achievement" and a "significant step forward in acknowledging and addressing the enduring legacy of slavery and its continued impact on American Descendants of Slavery in Maryland". We commend the General Assembly's commitment to confronting historical injustices and working towards a more equitable future for all Marylanders.

We specifically recognize the tireless efforts of **Senator C. Anthony Muse**, who sponsored the final bill and championed this crucial legislation, and **Delegate Aletheia McCaskill** for her unwavering dedication and leadership in championing this legislation through the House and Senate, respectively. Delegate McCaskill's persistence and Senator Muse's sponsorship of the final bill were instrumental in reaching this historic milestone. Furthermore, we acknowledge the crucial roles played by **Chair Joseline Pena-Melnyk** of the House Health and Government Operations Committee and **Chair Brian Feldman** of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee in guiding this important legislation through the committee process. Their leadership facilitated the necessary discussions and considerations that led to the bill's advancement. The strong support from members of the **Legislative Black Caucus** for this bill was particularly noteworthy and appreciated.

It is with profound disappointment that the ADOS Advocacy Foundation's Maryland Chapter must now address Governor Wes Moore's decision to veto Senate Bill 587. This action prevents the formal study and recommendation process that the General Assembly so diligently advanced.

Governor Moore cited the state's economic challenges and argued that he is already engaged in enacting policies and a "culture of repair," stating he does not need to wait two years for a commission study to act. He stated, **"the governor is ready to engage now"**. However, a rigorous, state-sanctioned study, such as the one mandated by SB 587, is absolutely necessary to define the specific economic and social harms to Black descendants of enslaved people and develop a precise, operational strategy for reparations efforts.

While the Governor claims to be ready to act now, his veto *eliminated* the very legislative mechanism designed to conduct the formal study, gather the necessary data, and build consensus for a targeted, operational strategy for reparations. The bill, as passed by the General Assembly, would have tasked the commission with studying appropriate benefits for individuals whose ancestors were enslaved in the State or were impacted by inequitable government policies, and would examine policies from 1877 to 1965 that led to economic disparities based on race. **Vetoing the study means vetoing the mandated process to truly define the harms and propose precise remedies needed for the "culture of repair" he espouses.** For the Governor to claim he is ready to act, yet reject the legislative vehicle designed to inform that action with data and specific recommendations, represents a deeply troubling inconsistency and a missed opportunity to leverage the state's resources for a comprehensive examination.

The ADOS Advocacy Foundation's Maryland Chapter strongly believes that justice for the descendants of slavery requires both acknowledging the harms of the past and establishing mechanisms for present and future agency. We reiterate our advocacy for two key components crucial to achieving these goals:

- **Robust Data Disaggregation:** We urge the state to prioritize the collection, analysis, and reporting of disaggregated data on the ADOS community within the Black/African American racial category across all sectors, including economic, health, education, and social indicators. This specific data is essential to accurately assess the unique and persistent disparities faced by ADOS due to the legacy of slavery and subsequent discriminatory policies, and to inform targeted and effective policies for repair and equity.
- **Establishment of a Maryland Commission on ADOS Affairs:** Building on the model of existing ethnic commissions in Maryland, we advocate for the creation of a permanent Maryland Commission on ADOS Affairs. This commission would provide a dedicated body to specifically address the ongoing needs and concerns of the ADOS community beyond the scope of a reparations study, ensuring long-term advocacy and agency for ADOS Marylanders in areas such as economic well-being, education, health, and political representation.

Despite the Governor's veto, the ADOS Advocacy Foundation's Maryland Chapter remains unequivocally committed to advocating for justice and addressing the disparities faced by American Descendants of Slavery in Maryland. We will continue to pursue avenues for acknowledgment and repair, emphasizing the need for data-driven solutions and dedicated governmental structures that specifically target the unique challenges resulting from the legacy of slavery and systemic racism. We believe that centering the needs and voices of the ADOS

community and embracing comprehensive, data-driven solutions and dedicated structures are essential for transformative change.

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