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ADOS Maryland Chapter Responds to Bill to Establish Maryland Reparations Commission

The American Descendants of Slavery Advocacy Foundation (ADOS AF) is a nationwide grassroots organization which was founded to prioritize federal reparations for descendants of chattel slavery in this country. Today, members of the ADOS Maryland Chapter testified at a hearing at the Maryland State House in Annapolis in response to HB 851.

The purpose of HB 851` is to create a Maryland Reparations Commission. The Commission has four tasks: developing compensation for the descendants of enslaved persons in Maryland; determining eligibility for compensation; requiring state agencies to assist the Commission; paying certain cash amounts to certain applicants; reimbursing certain applicants for certain tuition payments.

ADOS Maryland points out two drawbacks to the bill. They indicate there is a lack of funds to reimburse the Maryland descendants of chattel slavery for the systemic, targeted racism they endured because of their lineage. ADOS Maryland says the bill does not detail how state agencies will assist the Commission.

ADOS Maryland supports the establishment of the Maryland Reparations Commission with amendments. They want all Maryland state agencies to devise a disaggregation data plan, using the Black/African American racial category for collection and analysis. ADOS Maryland suggests the Commission include one individual who descends from two enslaved families in Maryland. That person should be selected by Loyola University's Slavery Task Force and Goucher College. The chapter proposes adding an economist to the Commission to calculate the cost and impact on Maryland's enslaved people. ADOS Maryland recommends establishing a Governor's Commission on ADOS Affairs and appointing two members from the ADOS Maryland Chapter, who will be named by the Chapter's Executive Council.

State budgets do not have the funding to absorb the trillions of dollars owed to ADOS for centuries of multi-generational, systemic racism and pillage rooted in enslavement, followed by the 200-plus years of residue endured by ADOS post-slavery. However, ADOS encourages state governments to support a federal, comprehensive reparations program to close the lineage wealth gap and decrease the economic, social and health disparities that have been uniquely inherited and lived by ADOS.