



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

Sanders Scores Historic Reparations Win: Healing and Justice Begin in New York!

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| ISSUE: **REPARATIONS**



Senator James Sanders Historic Reparations Bill Signed into Law: New York State Charts Path to Healing and Justice

New York, NY – December 19, 2023 – In a momentous victory for advocates of racial justice, Governor Kathy Hochul today signed into law the (S.1163-A/SANDERS Same as A.7691/Solages), a groundbreaking bill sponsored by Senator Sanders that establishes the “New York State Community Commission on Reparations Remedies.” The Commission will

research the harm from slavery and after slavery, including racial discrimination, in New York and recommend remedies and reparations. This legislation marks a historic turning point for the City of New York and the State of New York and sets a powerful example for the nation to follow.

Senator James Sanders Jr., Chair of the NY State Senate Select Majority Task Force on Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises, and Assemblymember Michaelle C. Solages, Chair of The New York State Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus, are both Chief Sponsors of the legislation. In 2020, California created a task force to study reparations. New York is the second state to study whether to issue reparations.

"This is a day that will be etched in the annals of our state's history," said **Senator James Sanders**, who has championed reparations for years. This commission marks a crucial step towards acknowledging that pain, understanding its present consequences, and finally taking action to build a more equitable future.

Senator James Sanders said "Today, we plant a seed of hope, not just for the City of New York and New York State, but for the nation. The bill number S1163A is a testament to the power of persistence, of unwavering voices demanding justice. Let this be a beacon, a call to action for every corner of this country to confront their own histories, to acknowledge the injustices that bind us, and to work together towards a future where reparations are not just a word, but a lived reality for all. I want to express my deepest gratitude to Governor Kathy Hochul for signing this historic bill into law. This is a monumental step forward in our fight for racial justice, and it would not have been possible without the Governor's courage and commitment. The bill number S1163A isn't a finish line, but a starting gate. The reparations

commission it establishes is a vessel for truth, a platform for voices silenced for too long. Their findings will not be easy, but they will be necessary. They will guide us towards reparations not just for the past, but for the future, building a legacy of equity where every child, regardless of their heritage, can dream without the shackles of historical injustice." I believe that reparations are essential to achieving true racial justice in our country. We must acknowledge and address the harms of the past in order to create a more just and equitable future for all.

Senator Jamaal T. Bailey said "Today, New York State takes an important step forward in confronting the long and painful legacy of slavery ingrained in the story of America. The societal ills that stem from the horrors of slavery are very much alive today. In New York, we have a great deal of work ahead to confront the lasting economic, political, and educational systems of oppression that have marginalized African-Americans for centuries. By shining a light on the darkest chapter of our history, our communities can begin to heal and move forward in shaping a brighter future for generations to come. I want to thank Senator Sanders and Assemblymember Solages for championing this historic legislation, Governor Kathy Hochul, Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and Speaker Carl Heastie for their work to advance justice for all New Yorkers."

Assemblywoman Michaelle C. Solages, Chair of the New York State Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian Legislative Caucus said "In acknowledging New York's history, we confront the high cost of racial injustices. By Governor Hochul signing into effect the Reparations & Remedies Commission, New York State will empower communities to actively participate in shaping the essential path forward toward unity and healing. Reparations lay the groundwork for a future where all New Yorkers can thrive and prosper. I commend the Legislature, the Governor, and advocates for their collaborative efforts. I am proud to have sponsored this legislation and eager to continue advancing together in shaping our shared future."

NYS AM Khaleel M. Anderson said “Today is a historic day — not just for Black New Yorkers — but for citizens of goodwill, fairness, and justice all across our great state. We can no longer willfully ignore the realities of structural racism and inequality that Black New Yorkers have endured for centuries. Governor Hochul’s signature today is a momentous occasion and call to action for America, signaling New York State’s sober commitment to a reckoning with its role in anti-Black racism, violence, and genocide. I commend Senator Sanders Jr. and Assemblywoman Solages for their leadership and statewide advocacy to bring this effort across the finish line. I thank Governor Kathy Hochul for signing this historic bill into law, ensuring that the Empire State finally begins to redress its harms by prioritizing truth and reconciliation for Black New Yorkers.”

Trevor Smith, Co-Founder/Executive Director of Narrative Power of the BLIS Collective said "Today marks a pivotal moment in our state's history as Governor Kathy Hochul took a crucial stride forward, committing New York to address the enduring and harmful impacts of slavery and anti-Black policies that stain our society. Our nation was founded on two ugly myths -- the lie that this land was uninhabited and that Africans were subhuman and thus subject to lifelong enslavement. As a state and a country, we must fulfill the broken promise of reconstruction and deliver reparations to the Black community. This endeavor aims not only to address the stark racial wealth gap but also to uproot anti-Blackness at its core, creating a transformed and liberated New York. It is now of the utmost importance that we ensure the commission receives full support to provide transformative recommendations. For now, let's celebrate; go tell it on the mountain, that a reparations commission is coming to New York!"

Nicole Carty, Executive Director of Get Free and resident of Brooklyn, said “Our generation backs Governor Hochul’s decision to take a historic step toward making freedom and equality real in New York. Gen Z and Millennials know that the lies and laws created to dehumanize, exploit, and control Black people are a threat to dignity and freedom for all. And the only

way to make a better future is by reckoning with the whole truth of our history and repairing the ongoing impacts of white supremacy. While MAGA Republicans want to continue this legacy by whitewashing our history and stoking fears against our efforts to create a more equal New York, we're bringing together New Yorkers from all walks of life to help this commission lead us forward and create a future where everyone can thrive, no exceptions. When Black people get free, we all get free."

Richard Brookshire, CEO Black Veterans Project said "Over four centuries, New York has engaged in a systematic project to undermine the self-determination of Black New Yorkers through social, political and economic subjugation. From the institution of slavery to de jure discrimination through segregation, vast divestment and mass incarceration -- state-sanctioned anti-Black racism has resulted in a 15 to 1 racial wealth gap encapsulating generations of harm. The Reparations Commission will serve as a crucial step toward repair while beating back nefarious attempts at historical erasure that seek to thwart a reckoning in actualizing equity and justice for all. Black Veterans Project applauds Governor Kathy Hochul, Senator James Sanders Jr. and Assemblywoman Michaelle Solages for their steadfast leadership and we salute the decades of intergenerational grassroots activists and community organizers that have made this commission possible."

The bill number S.1163-A establishes the New York State Community Commission on reparations remedies. The commission will be tasked with:

- Examining the institution of slavery in New York State and New York City; the extent to which the federal government, as well as State and local governments of New York State, supported the institution of slavery; how New York State engaged in the interstate transfer of enslaved Africans; the de jure and de facto discrimination against freed enslaved Africans, their descendants, and people of African descent, generally, at both the

State and federal levels of government, during the period between the end of the Civil War and the present; the lingering negative effects of the institution of slavery and discrimination on living people of African descent and on society in New York; and the current condition of living people of African descent in New York.

- Following their examinations, the Commission would recommend remedies and reparations in consideration of their findings to determine how the State of New York may provide for appropriate laws, policies, programs, projects, and other recommendations in order to reverse such injuries; their findings on the feasibility of the creation of a bureau to assist in the distribution and administration of remedies and reparations as recommended by the Commission; and the appropriate ways to educate the public of the Commission's findings.

The Office Of Senator James Sanders Jr. stands firmly behind the bill number, S1163A and its potential to pave the way for a more just and equitable future for all. We commend Senator James Sanders for his unwavering leadership and Governor Kathy Hochul for signing this historic legislation into law.