



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

New York Takes Historic Step: Reparations Commission Announced

JAMES SANDERS JR. February 29, 2024

| ISSUE: [REPARATIONS](#), [REMEDICATION](#), [AFRICAN-AMERICAN ISSUES](#), [COMMISSION](#)



New York, NY – Today, Governor Kathy Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Speaker Carl Heastie announced the appointment of nine distinguished individuals to serve on the New York State Community Commission on Reparations Remedies.

The Commission, established through legislation signed by Governor Hochul in December 2023, is tasked with examining the legacy of slavery and its lingering negative effects on people currently living in the State of New York, with the goal of issuing a report comprised of recommendations for appropriate action to address these longstanding inequities. This written report of findings and recommendations must be submitted to the temporary president of the senate, the speaker of the assembly, the minority leaders of the senate and the assembly, and the Governor of the State of New York no later than one year after the date of the first meeting of the commission.

New York is now the second state after California to launch such a body with the selected commissioners with the necessary expertise, experience, and values for giving New Yorkers a transformative roadmap for righting the wrongs of injustice in our state from its foundation.

The nine-member commission, composed of distinguished scholars, legal experts, and community leaders, will dedicate the next year to researching the systemic and enduring effects of slavery on Black communities in the state. Their findings and recommendations will inform potential policy proposals aimed at addressing the lasting disparities faced by Black residents across various aspects of life, including housing, education, healthcare, and economic opportunity.

Senator James Sanders Jr said...“I applaud the Governor, President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the Assembly for selecting such impeccable people to sit on this historic panel. Special thanks should go to the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and Asian Caucus; the Black Taskforce; the NAACP; the National Action Network; and innumerable activists who struggled for justice, not for recognition. As the son of a sharecropper and a domestic worker, I take pride in my small role in pursuing justice for the noble, yet much-maligned African American people. Let the commission arise and the words of Prophet Isaiah 1:17 ‘Learn to do right; seek justice, defend the oppressed.’ Now the real work begins. May the commissioners

disagree without becoming disagreeable. May wisdom mark their deliberations and reason, fairness and justice come from their labors.”

New York City Comptroller Brad Lander said...“New York is not an exception when it comes to the legacy of slavery, which has hindered the wealth accumulation for Black families for hundreds of years. As we confront the harsh reality of the racial wealth gap, our city and state cannot thrive when historical injustices hold a significant portion of our population back. Today, New York makes history by creating a reparations committee to study these inequities and potential reparations, which **my office has long supported**. Thanks to the efforts of Senator James Sanders Jr., Governor Kathy Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and Speaker Carl Heastie, New York is taking a long-needed step towards righting historical wrongs, fostering equity, and creating pathways of opportunity for Black residents.”

The Commission members are:

Jennifer Jones Austin is the CEO and Executive Director of FPWA, an anti-poverty policy and advocacy nonprofit with 170 member organizations; its work is centered on economic opportunity and upward mobility. She is a radio host, an author, and public speaker, and sits on the board of many organizations including the National Action Network, the Fordham University Feerick Center for Social Justice, the Center for Law, Brain and Behavior at Harvard University, and the NYC Board of Correction for which she is Chair. Ms. Jones Austin is the chairperson and a commissioner of the NYC Racial Justice Commission, the first commission of its kind in the nation tasked with targeting and dismantling structural and institutional racism across the city. Ms. Jones Austin is also a member of The African American Task Force for Vaccine Equity and Education, which is dedicated to helping overcome their inequitable barriers Black communities face during the rollout of the Covid-

19 vaccine; and she was a co-sponsor of the New York Police Department Reform and Reinvention Collaborative to end racialized policing and the criminalization of poverty. Ms. Jones Austin previously co-chaired the Mayoral Transition for Bill de Blasio and the NYC Procurement Policy Board.

Timothy R. Hogues serves as the Commissioner for the Department of Civil Service and President of the Civil Service Commission. He was nominated by Governor Kathy Hochul to serve in these roles in April 2022 and unanimously confirmed by the New York State Senate in June 2022. Prior to joining the Department of Civil Service, Commissioner Hogues served as the Personnel Commissioner for Erie County where he was responsible for overseeing services provided to over more than 130 appointing authorities and approximately 24,000 employees countywide through the implementation and maintenance of services that support and facilitate the recruiting, selection, hiring, development, and retention of local government and school district employees in accordance with Civil Service Laws and Regulations. Commissioner Hogues began this role after being appointed by Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz in 2019. Commissioner Hogues is a proud graduate of University of Buffalo where he graduated with a B.A. in Business Administration and Management.

Linda Brown-Robinson is the Immediate Past President of the Syracuse Onondaga NAACP. A born and raised proud New Yorker and a native of Mt. Vernon, NYC, Linda's activism first took hold upon relocating to upstate New York in 1968, where she joined a number of boards. She recalls that one of her first impactful boards was then known as the "Community Folk Art Gallery." A former Board Member of FOCUS Greater Syracuse, and past member of the Executive Committee for the Onondaga County Democratic Committee, Ms. Brown-Robinson currently serves on the Democratic 5th Ward Committee. Ms. Brown-Robinson is a 2021 InterFaith Leadership Award recipient and was recently appointed as the NYS NAACP Western Region Director, where she will oversee 11 Upstate NAACP Branches.

Darrick Hamilton, Ph.D. is a university professor, the Henry Cohen Professor of Economics and Urban Policy, and the founding director of the Institute on Race, Power and Political Economy at The New School. Dr. Hamilton served as a member of the economic committee of the Biden-Sanders Unity Task Force and he was a surrogate and advisor for the Bernie Sanders presidential campaign. He has advised numerous other leading Members of Congress, as well as various 2020 presidential candidates. Dr. Hamilton holds a Ph.D from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and a BA from Oberlin College.

Linda Tarrant-Reid is an author, historian, freelance journalist, photographer and community activist. Although most of her career has been focused on literary pursuits, she is currently administrating grow! Eat, a project to grow fresh produce to distribute free-of-charge to the food insecure in Westchester County. The initiative is a program of The Lincoln Park Conservancy, of which Ms. Tarrant-Reid is the Executive Director. Ms. Tarrant-Reid Linda graduated from Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) in Virginia with a BA in English.

Dr. Seanelle Hawkins serves as the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Urban League of Rochester, an affiliate of the National Urban League. Dr. Hawkins is an expert in community engagement and cultural change, advocacy, transitional and permanent supportive housing, fiscal stewardship, strategic planning, and staff development. Her nonprofit executive leadership includes over 20 years in various executive leadership roles for nonprofits and program consultancies in New York and Washington, DC. She also serves as an adjunct professor at St. John Fisher College in its doctoral program of Executive Leadership. A native of Brooklyn, NY, Dr. Hawkins received her bachelor's degree from Syracuse University, master's in strategic leadership at Roberts Wesleyan College, and her Doctorate of Education from the Executive Leadership Program at St. John Fisher College.

Dr. Ron Daniels is Founder and President of the Institute of the Black World 21st Century (IBW), a progressive, African centered, action-oriented Resource Center dedicated to empowering people of African descent and marginalized communities. As the administrator for the National African American Reparations Commission (NAARC), IBW has emerged as a leading organization within the U.S. and global reparations movements. Dr. Daniels serves as the Convener of NAARC. Dr. Daniels holds a BA in History from Youngstown State University, an MA in Political Science from the Rockefeller School of Public Affairs in Albany, New York and a Doctor of Philosophy in Africana Studies from the Union Institute and University in Cincinnati. Dr. Daniels is a Distinguished Lecturer Emeritus at York College, City University of New York where he taught courses in Political Science.

Lurie Daniel Favors, Esq. is the Executive Director at the Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College. She is an author, activist and attorney with a long-standing commitment to racial and social justice. Ms. Daniel Favors earned her JD from New York University, where she was a Root-Tilden-Kern public interest scholar. Ms. Daniel Favors graduated from Pennsylvania State University with a BA in African and African American Studies, with a Minor in Spanish Language. She hosts the Lurie Daniel Favors Show on Sirius XM's Urban View Network, a national, daily talk show that tackles issues of race, gender, culture, politics and the law.

Rev. Dr. Deborah D. Jenkins is Founding Pastor of Faith @Work Christian Church, Coop City, sustaining the ministry for almost 19 years with over 30 years of youth development experience which began as a Child Protective Services Caseworker, expanding to co-founding the Knowledge Development Center which provided quality afterschool services to Black and Latino males which included the New York Newsday Stock Market Game and other empowerment programming. Dr. Jenkins currently serves as NYPD Clergy Liaison in the 45th Precinct with a purpose to bridge the gap between community and law

enforcement and works as an adjunct professor at John Jay College in the Public Administration Department. Dr. Jenkins earned her BA from Herbert H. Lehman College, her MA in Policy and Administration from Brooklyn College and her MDiv and DMin from New York Theological Seminary.