

Submitter: Marjorie McRae

On Behalf Of: SB 776

Committee: Senate Committee On Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs

Measure: SB776

TO: Chair Manning, Jr., Vice Chair Thatcher, and other members of the Senate Committee On Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs

RE: SB 776 - SUPPORT

I am European-American whose ancestors were among the very first settlers of Virginia. In the subsequent 250 years, my ancestor's descendants owned thousands of slaves. I am a member of the Portland area chapter of a national organization, Coming To The Table, (comingtothetable.org), which links present-day descendants of slaves and present-day descendants of enslavers.

Slavery provided the bulk of the nation's wealth up to emancipation, and led to the development of the financial mechanisms on which modern capitalism rests (financing, mortgages, insurance, powerful managerial class, definitions of property and police in service of property, etc.) The 14th Amendment allows slavery as punishment for a crime, and the south used/abused conscript labor from 1865 until WWII to build both public infrastructure such as roads as well as private industry, such as the precursor to US Steel and others. The forced labor in industries such as coal and steel around Birmingham AL gave our country military advantage in world wars. Discriminatory housing and education practices, predatory lending and marketing practices, government funding of covert and proxy wars through drugs funneled to cities, and racial disparities in criminal sentencing have continued the economic exploitation of African Americans since WWII. And then there were the vast numbers of terrorist lynchings and "race riots" of white neighbors attacking Black neighbors and destroying their property. And acts of eminent domain, which in North Portland repurposed land from an African American community to a freeway and a hospital expansion (Legacy). The social, economic, and health consequences of slavery and ongoing racialized social structures are well documented.

In 1689 the hugely influential philosopher John Locke wrote about people's "right to seek reparations" after being treated abusively. Even slaveholders got reparations.

I applaud Chief Sponsor Senator Frederick, in whose district I live, and all who are taking leadership in this important initiative. A task force is a significant first step to deciding what reparations could be made, to whom, and by whom.

Please vote yes on SB 776.

Thank you.

Marjorie McRae

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