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On Behalf Of: Self
Committee: House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2995

To whom it may concern,
Here's an opposition piece to the idea of paying reparations to Black Americans. The argument rests on principles of fairness, practicality, and the potential consequences of such a policy.

The concept of reparations hinges on the idea that present-day Americans should financially compensate Black Americans for the historical wrongs of slavery and systemic discrimination. While the injustices of the past are undeniable—slavery was a brutal, dehumanizing institution, and its echoes lingered through Jim Crow and beyond—the case for reparations falters under scrutiny. It's not a question of whether history was unfair; it's a question of whether this solution is just or workable today.

First, fairness. Why should Americans today, many of whom have no direct connection to slavery, bear the burden of paying for it? The majority of white Americans are not descendants of slaveholders—many are immigrants or their children who arrived long after emancipation. Taxing them to fund reparations punishes people for sins they didn't commit, based solely on their skin color or nationality. That's not justice; it's collective guilt dressed up as equity. Meanwhile, Black Americans today, though still facing challenges, are not the same individuals who endured slavery or segregation. Paying them for suffering they didn't directly experience risks turning a moral argument into a transactional one, where identity becomes a claim check.

Second, practicality. Who qualifies? How do you define "Black American" in a nation of mixed ancestries and recent immigrants? Would a Nigerian-American who arrived in 2005 receive the same payment as someone whose ancestors were enslaved in Alabama? What about wealthy Black individuals—do they need reparations? The logistics collapse under the weight of these questions. Estimates for reparations range from hundreds of billions to trillions of dollars—money that would come from taxpayers already stretched thin. Diverting those funds from schools, infrastructure, or healthcare could harm everyone, including Black communities who rely on those services most.

Finally, the consequences. Reparations could deepen racial divides rather than heal them. Handing out payments based on race risks fostering resentment among those who pay and entitlement among those who receive, undermining the shared progress of the last century. It reduces complex social issues to a dollar amount, as if money

can erase history or its lingering effects. Worse, it distracts from addressing present-day problems—education gaps, job opportunities, criminal justice reform—that would do more to lift people up than a one-time check.

The past can't be undone with cash. Acknowledging history's scars is vital, but the answer lies in building a better future for all, not in settling old scores. Reparations sound noble in theory, but in practice, they're a Pandora's box of division and impracticality. We should focus on equality of opportunity now, not reparative accounting for then.

Back when slaves were emancipated, they were given 40 acres and a mule. That, along with the blood of patriots who died for their freedom was considered payment enough.

Cordially,
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