

RESOLUTION

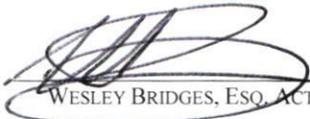
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April 2, 2021

Approved as to Form and Legality

Factual content certified by



WESLEY BRIDGES, ESQ. ACTING CITY ATTORNEY



MATTHEW H. CONLON, MUNICIPAL CLERK

Councilman/woman Santiago Rodriguez, Robin Vaughn, Jerell Blakeley presents the following Resolution:

A RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE ENACTMENT OF ASSEMBLY BILL A711, THE "NEW JERSEY REPARATIONS TASK FORCE ACT"

WHEREAS, Trenton is a multicultural and diverse city which is home to tens of thousands of African Americans who make up more than forty nine percent of the City's population; and,

WHEREAS, from 1619 to 1865, approximately 4,000,000 Africans and their descendants, under a practice that was constitutionally and statutorily sanctioned, were enslaved in the United States and the colonies that became the United States; and,

WHEREAS, An overwhelming body of scholarship, legal and community evidentiary documentation, and the modern day lived experiences of the descendants of enslaved Africans form the basis for inquiry into the ongoing effects of the institution of slavery and its legacy of persistent systemic structures of discrimination on living Black people and communities in the United States; and,

WHEREAS, slavery took root very deeply in New Jersey. In the early 17th Century, the first enslaved African people arrived in New Netherland, a Dutch settlement established in the Mid-Atlantic, which included portions of present-day New Jersey. As the demand for labor increased, the number of enslaved African people imported to New Jersey increased, with Bergen County becoming the largest slaveholding county in the Province of New Jersey. In 1704, the Province of New Jersey introduced the "Slave Code," which prohibited enslaved Africans and free Africans from owning property and made certain actions, like staying out past curfew, illegal for Black people. Although New Jersey outlawed the importation of enslaved Africans in 1786 and enacted a law in 1804 to abolish slavery gradually, the State Legislature passed "Peace Resolutions" in 1863 denying President Lincoln's power to emancipate slaves and later voted against the 13th amendment to the United States Constitution;

WHEREAS, in 1844, New Jersey also restricted access to the ballot box by denying the vote to people with criminal convictions the same year it restricted voting to white men, the first Northern state to do so; and,

WHEREAS, New Jersey's deep roots in American slavery and its vestiges have endured to the present day. A direct line can be traced from New Jersey's role in American slavery to its system today of voter suppression, racial wealth disparities, mass incarceration, racial segregation, and crumbling infrastructure in Black communities in New Jersey, such as the current elevated lead levels in water and homes; and,

WHEREAS, to address these systemic challenges in New Jersey, the “New Jersey Reparations Task Force” will research, write, and publish a report that will make the case for State-based reparations in New Jersey and outline policy recommendations that seek to repair the harm that has resulted from America’s original sin in the Garden State; and

WHEREAS, the legacy of slavery has given rise to systematic and persistent racism which still pervades American society and has resulted in inequities in access to democracy, infrastructure, youth justice, housing and racial wealth gaps and racial segregation, the effects of which are still felt and endured by African Americans and Trentonians, to this day; and,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Trenton that this body fully endorses the enactment of the New Jersey Reparations Task force Act; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Municipal Clerk is hereby directed to forward a certified copy of this resolution to the New Jersey Assembly and the New Jersey Senate, including Trenton’s local representatives of those bodies.

	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent		Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent		Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
BLAKELEY	✓				MUSCHAL	✓				MCBRIDE	✓			
CALDWELL	✓				RODRIGUEZ	✓								
WILSON	✓													
HARRISON	✓				VAUGHN	✓								

This Resolution was adopted at a Meeting of the City Council of the City of Trenton on April 1 2021

Keely McBride
President of Council

MA Ch
City Clerk