

# NY state panel will study legacy of slavery, possible reparations

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New York will study the generational impacts of slavery through a new state commission to consider reparations for Black residents.

Gov. Kathy Hochul on Tuesday approved the study of slavery's legacy. The commission will possibly make recommendations for monetary compensa-

tion or other reparations for New York's Black residents under the effort. The Democrat-controlled state Legislature approved the measure in June.

New York became the second state to consider reparations, following a similar path to California, where a commission recommended a range of policies to offset the impact of slavery and racism. The cost of reparations in California have been estimated at more than \$800 billion, though the amount would be de-

termined by lawmakers through potential legislation.

In New York, the commission will be tasked with examining the legacy of slavery, subsequent discrimination against people of African descent and the impact these forces continue to have in the present day, Hochul said in a statement.

During a media briefing, Hochul touted New York's pivotal role in combating slavery and racism through wars and

the Civil Rights movement, but she also acknowledged how the state benefited from the forced labor of those stolen away from Africa.

"What is hard to embrace is that our state actually flourished from that slavery," she said, noting its residents have a "moral obligation to reckon with all parts of our shared history as New Yorkers."

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# Slavery

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The commission would be directed to: “Examine the current condition of living people of African descent in the state of New York, to the extent practicable, including, but not limited to, economic, political, educational, and social conditions.”

The commission would be made up of nine members chosen by Hochul and the leaders of the state Senate and Assembly. Any recommendations made by the committee would be non-binding.

State and local lawmakers and racial justice advocates, including the Rev. Al Sharpton, praised the study as an historic step towards making amends for the unjust role slavery played in shaping New York, as well as lingering negative impacts of racism and racial disparity.

The first enslaved Africans arrived in New York in the 1620s and built some of the earliest infrastructure and buildings, “including the wall that gives Wall Street its name,” state lawmakers noted.



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Prior to the American Revolution in the late 1700s, there were more enslaved Africans in New York City than in any other city except Charleston, South Carolina. At the time, the population of enslaved Africans accounted for 20% of New York's population, while 40% of colonial New York household owned enslaved Africans, state officials said.

California's reparations task force

made a list of recommendations earlier this year that included a formal apology and the creation of an agency to handle compensation claims and possible “down payments” to eligible residents. It also suggested how to calculate the amount California owes its Black residents.

*USA TODAY Network and The Associated Press contributed to this report.*