

A proposed speech and policy position paper  
regarding reparations for the American Descendants Of Slaves.  
ADOS

By: James Roguski  
310-619-3055

Let me begin by making a crystal clear, unambiguous declarative statement.

The United States government, corporations, universities, civic and religious organizations and the people collectively owe a multi-faceted debt to the American Descendants Of Slaves.

This massive debt has been growing and compounding for over 400 years and it cannot be considered to have been fully repaid until a multi-faceted equality has become the reality for the American Descendants Of Slaves for another 400 years. The damages have been inflicted over at least 20 generations, so the repair of these damages must be such that its benefits also continue for 20 generations.

Starting with the abduction, enslavement and brutal abuse of millions of people, these injustices have unfortunately continued to this day by being disguised in many forms. From Jim Crow laws that resulted in segregation, redlining, the military draft, racial profiling, police brutality and mass incarceration that resulted in prison slavery, broken families, destroyed communities, blatant discrimination, unequal incomes, cultural misappropriation and the theft and prevention of the accumulation of wealth, our society as a whole has turned the American dream into an ongoing nightmare for the American Descendants Of Slaves.

While nearly all descendants of American slaves are viewed by themselves and others as being “people of color,” not all people of color are descendants of American slaves. Recent immigrants from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and central and South America may certainly have experienced their own version of discrimination and abuse. They have their own claims that must be settled in their own way.

Clearly, and undeniably, the descendants of the indigenous peoples of the many tribes that occupied the continent prior to 1492 also have enormous claims. The injustices and abuse done to them must also be addressed in their own unique and appropriate way.

The financial, emotional, intellectual, psychological and societal injuries that have been systematically perpetrated against an entire group of people have caused deep wounds in the fabric of our country. These wounds have never received the proper treatment, so they have only festered and grown worse over time. We must treat these wounds and allow them to heal so that every person in America can be made whole again.

The national psyche of our country and our collective karma can never be purified and balanced unless we repay and repair those people who have been systematically disadvantaged.

Until we the people openly face up to and admit to the atrocities that continue to occur and we voluntarily face the fact that we still have a problem that is rooted in slavery, then we will continue to live in a divided country.

We have had 400 years that have been filled with horrible wrongs. We must strive to have 400 years of fairness and equality before we even begin to believe that we have accomplished the dream so eloquently presented by Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.

It is ignorant to point to a handful of prosperous athletes, musicians, entertainers and others who have achieved success AGAINST the odds that are clearly stacked up against the American Descendants Of Slaves as an excuse to claim that the unfairness has somehow been corrected. In fact, it is the relatively low number of exceptions that actually proves the rule.

Only when the data clearly shows that the American Descendants Of Slaves have achieved and enjoyed equality with all other Americans and have been fully integrated into the fabric of society for 400 years will we be able to finally turn the page on some of the most shameful chapters of our nation's history.

While certainly not a complete list, we must measure and strive for four centuries of equality through equal rates of income, wealth, home ownership, educational achievement, government representation, corporate control, rates incarceration, public safety, business ownership and professional employment in the medical, legal and financial sectors of our society for the American Descendants Of Slaves when compared to the United States as a whole.

While it is mostly true that a rising tide can lift all boats, it is all too easy to ignore that entire segments of our society have been systematically denied the right to even have a boat. Even if they could afford a lifeboat, society has redlined them outside of the financial marina that provides the favored class with access to the ocean of opportunity. As a society we have sadly gone so far as to deny them even a life preserver, while others are given yachts, and the result has been that the rising tide of American prosperity has served to drown the disadvantaged while lifting only the very, very few.

We do not want to GIVE the American Descendants Of Slaves anything. This is about repaying a debt that has been compounding and growing for 400 years.

The repayment of this debt must take priority over other ideas and plans to address other inequalities and concerns in our society. Yes, health care, immigration and concerns about the environment are very important, but they are of a different character than the payment of debt that is four centuries old. Improvements to society as a whole must be seen as separate from the repayment of a specific, long-standing debt.

There are precedents regarding reparations and quite frankly, the arguments against them for the descendants of American slaves are flimsy and self-serving. Holocaust survivors and people of Japanese descent who were illegally held in internment camps have received reparations. It is undeniable that crimes against humanity have occurred in the past and they continue to occur in today's society. To deny these truths is to deny reality.

The American Descendants Of Slaves include millions of people. As so, no one solution will satisfy each and every person's concept of what a proper answer should be. With that, here is a 20 point plan that should be seen as a starting point.

1. We must first define the American Descendants Of Slaves as any person who can trace their ancestry back to at least one direct descendant who was enslaved.

**2. The United States census must establish “the American Descendants Of Slaves” as a separate attribute to be recorded in the 2020 census. This specific issue comes under the heading of being an EXTREME EMERGENCY. Legislation MUST BE ENACTED IMMEDIATELY to ensure that this data is collected during the 2020 census. The American Descendants Of Slaves cannot and will not wait another decade if the opportunity to collect this information during the 2020 census is missed. LEGISLATION MUST BE ENACTED IN 2019 SO THAT THIS DATA WILL BE COLLECTED DURING THE 2020 CENSUS. THIS MUST HAPPEN AND IT MUST HAPPEN IMMEDIATELY.**

3. There must be swift action taken to release those who have been incarcerated for non-violent crimes that have been disproportionately enforced against the American Descendants Of Slaves.

4. The Department of Justice must be directed to create a permanent bureau to investigate every shooting (or tasing) by law enforcement throughout the country.

5. The overall value of the monetary reparations to be given to the American Descendants Of Slaves should be an amount that would achieve equity with the median wealth of all Americans. In 2019, an amount of \$100,000 per person (individuals, not households) seems to be a reasonable starting point.

6. It's not just about money. Individual descendants of American slaves should enjoy freedom of choice and be given the ability to select from a menu of options to determine their optimal personal reparations. Each solution should be unique and decided by each individual person.

7. Quality housing is of vital importance. One choice of reparation could include the building of new individual homes or the repair and renovation of existing homes for the American Descendants Of Slaves.

8. Higher education is also of vital importance. Access to advanced college and university education or other forms of education should be another option for reparations made available to the American Descendants Of Slaves.

9. Entrepreneurial opportunity is also of vital importance. Grants to enable small business creation or facilitate the growth of existing businesses should be another option for reparations made available to the American Descendants Of Slaves.

10. Freedom from crushing debt is vital to everyone's economic health. Another option for reparations to be made available to the descendants of American slaves should be the forgiveness of debt.

11. Affirmative action must be clearly and legally defined through an Act of Congress to specifically address the imbalances in opportunity between society as a whole and the American Descendants Of Slaves.

12. Large corporations that fail to meet guidelines for employment and equal pay for the American Descendants Of Slaves must be made to pay additional taxes until the imbalances are repaired.

13. Colleges, universities and other educational organizations that meet and/or exceed the guidelines for undergraduate enrollment and programs leading to higher degrees for the American Descendants Of Slaves must receive additional government grants and funds as a reward for their work to repair past injustices in education opportunity. This would obviously include traditionally “Black” colleges and universities.

14. All areas of the United States in which the population density of the American Descendants Of Slaves exceeds a certain percentage (to be determined) and where the median income of the American Descendants of Slaves is lower than a certain amount (again, to be determined) such areas must be designated as “areas in need of support.” Multiple programs must be implemented to specifically support improvements in health, opportunity, education, small business and job creation in these areas. Other programs should promote public banks owned and operated primarily by descendants of American slaves, and programs to encourage high-quality but affordable groceries and restaurants in areas that have come to be known as “food deserts.”

15. The Environmental Protection Agency must be directed to identify specific areas where businesses or transportation that have been located in or near residential areas have caused unhealthy levels of pollution and they must take appropriate measures to rectify the source of the problems.

16. The Department of Health and Human Services must be directed to identify areas in which people are experiencing increased levels of disease and provide funding for health care needed as a result of geographically related risks in the “areas in need of support”.

17. The Department of Energy must be directed to support advances in alternative energy and energy conservation by implementing pilot programs specifically for the American Descendants Of Slaves.

18. The Department of Transportation must be directed to support advances in improved mass transit and alternative and/or green transportation by implementing pilot programs within “areas in need of support.”

19. The right to vote is unalienable. Voting rights must be secured for all Americans, but specific legislation must be enacted to remove any legal restrictions that might specifically disenfranchise the voting rights of the American Descendants Of Slaves. Conviction of a crime should not affect the voting rights of any human being.

20. Congress must pass and the President must sign a Joint Resolution formally acknowledging and apologizing for all of the past injustices perpetrated upon the descendants of American slaves and their ancestors.

This is just a start.

Obviously, conversations and discussions and even debates must occur to improve and enhance this 20 point plan. The American Descendants of Slaves have waited for 400 years for these injustices to be corrected.

NOW is the time to take action.