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Schumer Announces Support for Reparations

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In case anyone had any doubt that race politics is a central part of the modern Democratic Party, the decision of Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) to support a bill creating a commission to study reparations for slavery should put any doubts to rest.

“The legacy of slavery and Jim Crow is still with us and that’s why we need to do a lot more,” Schumer said in supporting legislation by Representative Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas) and Senator Cory Booker (D-N.J.). Schumer said, “I’ve always believed racism is the poison of America.”

“When a significant part of America is held back, all of America is held back,” Schumer added.

In June, a House subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee, the Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, held a hearing on the issue of the lasting legacy of slavery and what is needed to fix it. There is little doubt that the commission will keep the issue of reparations alive through the 2020 political campaigns, although the commission will supposedly consider other ways to compensate the descendants of slaves for slavery. The House hearing was euphemistically called a “path to restorative justice.”

Among the witnesses at the hearing of June 19 — a date known as “Juneteenth” — the anniversary of the date that the end of slavery was announced in 1865 in Texas, was Ta-Nehisi Coates. Coates wrote an essay in *The Atlantic* in 2014 entitled “The Case for Reparations.”

Coates won the 2012 Hillman Prize for Opinion and Analysis Journalism from the Sidney Hillman Foundation. (Hillman was the founder of the Congress of Industrial Organizations and a dedicated Marxist who had emigrated from Russia after the unsuccessful revolution of 1905). Coates’ father was active in the Black Panther organization.

Actor Danny Glover, a long-time advocate of reparations, also testified.

Now, the leader of the Democratic Party in the U.S. Senate — Chuck Schumer — is throwing his support behind the idea of reparations, although he admitted that he is not an “expert” on the issue. He added that he will await the conclusions of the commission.

In the meantime, the Democrats will no doubt hold out the possibility that black Americans will receive some sort of monetary compensation to make up for a system that was ended in the United States by the 13th Amendment in 1865. This is not surprising, as the Democrats shamelessly gin up race hatred during each election for political purposes. In past elections, they have even said that a vote for the Republicans could lead to more arson of black churches.

Exactly how reparations would even work is unclear. No one is now living who was either a slave or a



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slaveowner, nor are any of their children still alive. It has been almost 155 years since slavery ended. That means that only distant descendants of slaves could theoretically receive compensation. And where would the money come from? No one seriously thinks that all persons who were not descendants of slaves are going to line up and fork over cash to the descendants of slaves.

Moreover, it would be as nonsensical as arresting and imprisoning the children of murderers and thieves for their parents' crimes.

The obvious answer is that the money would come from the U.S. Treasury. Along with existing promises of Social Security and Medicare, multiple Democratic candidates for president have already promised to expand Medicare to "all" Americans, pay off all student loans, provide for free college tuition, and spend trillions to fight the alleged harmful effects of climate change.

Another question that would need to be answered is what about Americans who have both ancestors who were slaves *and* ancestors who were slaveowners? As the number of mixed-racial marriages continues to increase, these numbers are quite high. Should such a person take money from one pocket and put it in another pocket?

It is hard to imagine anything more unjust than forcing individuals who had nothing to do with the institution of slavery in America (which would be every person in America today) to give one penny to another person because that person had an ancestor who was a slave.

Should the descendants of Americans — civilians in Virginia, Georgia, and South Carolina — whose property was burned or stolen by the Union Army during the Civil War be compensated by the federal government responsible for such atrocities?

That will never happen because Schumer and other supporters of reparations see no political gain by studying such U.S. government-sponsored war crimes. And most Americans, even those whose ancestors lost their homes, businesses, livestock, and crops simply because they lived in areas that the Union army maliciously put to the torch, understand that the perpetrators, as well as the victims, are long since dead.

Photo of Chuck Schumer: [senate.gov](https://www.senate.gov)

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