

RESOLUTION

THE CITY OF CHICAGO ANNUALLY RECOGNIZES AND HONORS FEBRUARY 25th AS NATIONAL REPARATIONS AWARENESS DAY

WHEREAS Black History Month highlights the rich history and contributions of Black individuals in the City of Chicago and beyond;

WHEREAS the Conrad Worrill Community Reparations Commission (CWCRC) and the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA) partner annually on National Reparations Awareness Day (02/25) to foster education and dialogue about reparations as a tool for justice and repair;

WHEREAS N'COBRA, established in 1987, is a national coalition dedicated to educating, mobilizing, and advocating for reparations for African descendants in the United States. In the 1990s, N'COBRA inaugurated National Reparations Awareness Day on February 25th to collectively highlight historic injustices such as the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre and to unify efforts in the fight for reparations, using this day to build awareness and galvanize public support;

WHEREAS reparations have been utilized in the United States as a form of redress for historical and systemic injustices, including but not limited to:

- **Japanese Americans** forcibly relocated and incarcerated during World War II, who received formal apologies and financial restitution under the Civil Liberties Act of 1988;
- **Native American tribes**, who have received settlements for land seizures and treaty violations, such as the 1946 establishment of the Indian Claims Commission;
- **Jewish Holocaust survivors**, supported by U.S. government initiatives to recover

and return assets and provide restitution;

- **Descendants of the Rosewood Massacre in Florida (1923)**, where survivors received financial reparations under state legislation passed in 1994;

WHEREAS Chicago made history in 2015 by establishing a \$5.5 million reparations package for survivors of police torture under Cmdr. Jon Burge, marking the first municipal reparations program in the U.S. to address racially motivated law enforcement abuse;

WHEREAS Evanston, IL, became the first U.S. city to implement a reparations program for Black residents in 2021, allocating \$10 million in cannabis sales tax revenue to fund initiatives addressing historical housing discrimination, including \$25,000 grants for eligible Black residents to assist with home purchases, mortgage payments, and home repairs;

WHEREAS Chicago's history reflects its complicity in the systemic oppression of Black communities, as detailed in Executive Order 2024-1, including but not limited to:

- **Black Codes and Redlining:** Legal frameworks that enforced racial segregation and denied Black Chicagoans access to quality housing, education, and economic opportunities;
- **Urban Renewal and Public Housing Policies:** Projects that displaced thousands of Black families while promoting development in predominantly White areas, exacerbating segregation and economic inequality;
- **Federal Highway Construction:** Infrastructure projects that destroyed vibrant Black neighborhoods, severing community ties and displacing families;
- **Contract Sales and Housing Covenants:** Predatory housing practices that robbed Black families of generational wealth, amounting to billions of dollars in lost equity;

WHEREAS systemic inequities persist today in the form of disparities in health, employment, homeownership, and life expectancy, with a notable 11.4-year life expectancy gap between Black and non-Black Chicagoans;

WHEREAS National Reparations Awareness Day also aims to promote a positive

narrative by showcasing the resilience, creativity, and contributions of Black Americans to society through curated exhibits, educational workshops, and storytelling sessions;

WHEREAS the day serves as a platform for utilizing cultural achievements, including screenings of films highlighting historical narratives and reparative themes, as well as live performances of spoken word poetry, theater, and musical tributes;

WHEREAS fine arts programs, including visual art exhibits, community murals, and interactive installations, are organized to inspire dialogue and healing while honoring reparation artistry and cultural expression;

WHEREAS educational activities, such as guided tours of historic landmarks, expert panel discussions, and community-led forums, provide opportunities to learn about the systemic harms inflicted upon Black communities and the ongoing efforts to address them;

~~**WHEREAS** Chicago has made strides in reparative justice, including the historic 2015 reparations package for John Burge torture survivors, the establishment of the Chicago Reparations Subcommittee in 2020, and a \$500,000 allocation in the 2024 city budget for drafting reparations legislation;~~

WHEREAS Chicago has made strides in reparative justice, including the first Reparations Ordinance, Slavery Era Disclosure by Dorthy Tilman, who laid the foundation and groundwork to ignite a reparations movement in 2002. The historic 2015 reparations package for John Burge torture survivors. The establishment of the very first Reparations Resolution which led to the establishment of the Chicago Reparations Subcommittee in 2020, a \$500,000 allocation in the 2024 city budget towards the formation of a new task force aimed at securing reparations for Black residents in Chicago. And the signing of the very first Reparations Executive Order 2024-1;

~~**WHEREAS** National Reparations Awareness Day serves as a platform to educate the public about the components of reparations—Compensation, Restitution, Rehabilitation, Satisfaction, and Guarantees of Non-Repetition—and to inspire collective action for justice;~~

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, the Mayor and members of the City of Chicago City Council, recognize February 25th as **National Reparations Awareness Day** and commit to using this day to educate our community on Chicago’s history of systemic harm, amplify the voices of those affected, and advance reparations as a path toward justice and equity for Black residents.

Alderman Stephanie Coleman

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