



Maryland Lawmakers passed legislation on Reparations

In the 2025 General Assembly, the Maryland State Legislature voted to create a **Reparations Commission** that will dig into the root causes of racial inequality and recommend real policy remedies (SB 587/HB 1422).

Unfortunately, Governor Moore vetoed the legislation.

Lawmakers — led by the Legislative Black Caucus — brought it back in December's special session and **overrode his veto** with more than the required majority in both chambers.

Why a Commission now?

The Legislative Black Caucus said in a statement issued on social media that the reparations commission was needed because “at a time of growing attacks on diversity and equity, [the override] reaffirms our shared commitment to truth-telling, accountability, and meaningful progress for Black Marylanders.”

Why override Governor Moore's veto?

- ✓ A formal, thorough study ensures real solutions. Lawmakers argued that without a commission, any proposals risk dismissal as merely symbolic or unconstitutional. A documented process builds credibility and legitimacy.
- ✓ History still shapes Maryland today. Generations of racial injustice, from slavery to redlining and segregation, continue to affect health, wealth, education, and housing outcomes. You can't fix inequity without a full understanding of its harms.
- ✓ This wasn't brand-new territory. Maryland has studied this issue before — but never in a way that looks at cumulative economic and social damage with an eye toward recommending policy changes.

Why did the Governor veto the bill ?

Gov. Moore said he vetoed the bill because “now is not the time for another study” (*May 16, 2025, letter to Sen. President Bill Ferguson*) and wanted to focus on immediate action to close racial gaps through homeownership, entrepreneurship, education, and food access. His position was that Maryland has done a lot of studies already.

The legislature said more work is needed.

This override was about moving beyond avoidance and toward honest, structured investigation of how historical injustice has shaped Maryland today – and setting the stage for real, actionable repair.

What is the Reparations Commission?

The law establishes a 23-member voluntary commission to:

- ✓ Study how slavery, Jim Crow, and discriminatory state/local policies harmed Black Marylanders.
- ✓ Look specifically at federal, state, and local laws from 1877 through 1965 that caused racial inequality.
- ✓ Recommend appropriate reparative measures – including apologies, monetary compensation, housing assistance, tuition waivers, tax rebates, debt relief, and more.

It's not about blame... It's about accountability. The Commission is about fixing systems, not pointing fingers at individuals.

We applaud the State Legislature for showing real courage by overriding the veto.

