



March 24, 2023

To the Honorable City Council President, Nick Mosby  
and Members of the Baltimore City Council  
City Hall, 100 N. Holliday Street, Room 409  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

**Re: CC Bill 23-0353 Community Reinvestment and Reparations Commission**

Dear President and City Council Members,

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) has reviewed City Council Bill 23-0353 Community Reinvestment and Reparations Commission. For the purpose of creating the Community Reinvestment and Reparations Commission to distribute certain funds in accordance with State law; establishing the purpose and duties of the Commission; providing for the composition of the Commission; requiring certain reports; defining certain terms; requiring certain individuals file certain financial disclosures; and generally relating to the Community Reinvestment and Reparations Commissions.

DHR has reviewed the above-referenced bill and supports the legislation in theory, but defers to the Law Department on the legal form and sufficiency of this bill.

Currently, there are only a few cities within the United States that have implemented similar commissions to handle social reparations. The Asheville City Council and Buncombe County Board of Commissioners (both in North Carolina) appointment members to their Reparations Commission in March 2022. The Reparations Commission is “empowered to make short, medium, and long-term recommendations that will make significant progress toward repairing the damage caused by public and private systemic racism.”<sup>1</sup> Additionally, the Commission is tasked with issuing reports to the City and other community groups to incorporate reparations into their respective short-term and long-term priorities and plans.

Similarly, Saint Paul, Minnesota established the Saint Paul Recovery Act Community Reparations Commission on January 4, 2023, in an effort to address the discrimination that African-Americans faced which “included redlining, racial covenants restricting the sale of real

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<sup>1</sup> *Community reparations commission*. The City of Asheville. (2023, March 14). Retrieved March 20, 2023, from <https://www.ashevillenc.gov/departments/city-clerk/boards-and-commissions/reparations-commission/>

estate, and the destruction of the Rondo residential neighborhood and business district to make way for I-94. Disparities in homeownership, economic prosperity, education, and healthcare resulted.”<sup>2</sup> This ordinance took effect on February 13, 2023, and City Council anticipated taking applications during that same week.

Systemic racism has affected African-Americans and other minorities for many years. By taking steps to remunerate those most greatly impacted for time and opportunities lost through unfair legal proceedings, harassment, and other socio-economic hurdles, we strive toward undoing some of the damage that has been done and positioning them for new opportunities. Economic reparations are only one component of the process, however. Formulating new solutions to these issues is the ongoing task of redevelopment that these and similar commissions need to undertake. Additionally, by doing so, Baltimore would be a trailblazer and could set an example for other cities to follow.

DHR supports compensation practices which promote fair and equitable treatment as well as a level playing ground for all citizens, regardless of race, ethnicity, or national origin. Again, however, we defer this matter to the Law Department for legal form and sufficiency.

For additional questions or concerns, contact me at [Quinton.Herbert@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:Quinton.Herbert@baltimorecity.gov) or by phone at (410) 396-1563.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Quinton M. Herbert". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Quinton M. Herbert, JD

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<sup>2</sup> *City Council Reparations Efforts*. Saint Paul Minnesota. (2023, March 3). Retrieved March 20, 2023, from <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/city-council/city-council-reparations-efforts>