**TRIGGER TERM**

Reparations

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| **HARMFUL DETOUR** | **HEALING REDIRECT** |
| The enslavement of Black Americans is ancient history. No one from that time is alive today. Reparations represent an unearned “handout” for Black Americans in the 21st-century. | While slavery no longer exists in the U.S., its enduring legacy is undeniable. Descendants of slaves account for [12% of all Americans](https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-commentary/juneteenth-reparations-misconceptions-1186060/) but hold [below 2% percent](https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/disparities-in-wealth-by-race-and-ethnicity-in-the-2019-survey-of-consumer-finances-20200928.htm) of the country’s wealth. Since the abolishment of slavery, the federal government has sustained the Black-white wealth gap through policies deliberately designed to exploit the labor of Black Americans and block them from accumulating wealth, including discriminatory homeownership, education and business development laws. The [$11 trillion wealth gap](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/30/business/racial-wealth-gap.html) that now exists between Black and white Americans [cannot be closed](https://socialequity.duke.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/what-we-get-wrong.pdf) solely through affirmative action programs or – as is often suggested – hard work. Large-scale federal intervention and investment is [necessary](https://www.brookings.edu/policy2020/bigideas/why-we-need-reparations-for-black-americans/). And, since the federal government established the Black-white wealth gulf and has continued to reinforce it for centuries, that intervention is both justified and long overdue. |
| Why should only Black Americans receive reparations? | Reparations for Black Americans would not diminish any other group’s suffering or need for compensation, nor would it be unprecedented. [Previously](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/19/us/reparations-slavery.html), U.S. government programs have provided reparations for groups such as Indigenous and Japanese Americans. |