

Maryland recommends \$100K payments to descendants of lynching victims after study

By Joshua Nelson

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Maryland is recommending that \$100,000 per person be issued to descendants of lynching victims after a state-sponsored lynchings study.

The Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its final report last month after being established in 2019. The report is described as the first state-sponsored effort in the United States to investigate, document, and "reckon with the history of racial terror lynching within its own borders."

The commission was created after then-delegate and now state House speaker, Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk, sponsored the law in 2019.

"This is just the beginning, and there's a lot of work to be done," Peña-Melnyk said via The Daily Record.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS HOSTED STATE-FUNDED COMMITTEE MEETING WHERE PROFESSORS ADVOCATED FOR REPARATIONS



Gov. Wes Moore, the country's first Black governor, stunned lawmakers when he vetoed a bill that would establish a reparations commission to study the Reconstruction and Jim Crowe periods. (Shannon Finney/NBC via Getty Images)

"The fires of resentment, mistrust, and division that burn in our communities today were lit by torches of racial terror centuries ago, and we cannot extinguish those fires by ignoring how they started," the commission's report said.

The commission concluded that state officials and institutions were complicit in 38 lynchings that followed the Civil War and that the perpetrators were never held accountable in any of the deaths.

"Critically, they call for accountability and acknowledgment of state and institutional complicity in racial terrorism, reparations for those harmed, and systemic reforms to prevent future injustices," the report stated.

Among 84 recommendations, the group proposed that state leaders atone for the past through cash payments. "Using anti-lynching legislation that was introduced in the Maryland General Assembly in 1898 and 1933 as a guide," the commission recommended that up to \$100,000 be paid to every descendant of lynching victims and up to \$10,000 for descendants of people who lived in communities impacted by lynchings.

"Identifying Black families affected by racial terror lynching — including those separated, displaced, who lost businesses, were denied the right to bury loved ones, or suffered physical and mental health impacts — is essential for reparatory justice," the report stated.

MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY CALLED OUT FOR OVERRIDING GOVERNOR'S VETO ON 'FOOLISH' REPARATIONS



Maryland is recommending that \$100K be issued to descendants of lynching victims in a state-sponsored lynchings study. (Ozan Kose/AFP via Getty Images)

"Compensation aligns with international human rights law recognizing financial and material redress as a key component of reparations," it explained further.

The commission held 14 public hearings from 2021 to 2025 around the state and finished the project with a statewide institutional reconciliation hearing.

"We listened to descendants, historians, community leaders, policymakers, and advocates. We examined thousands of pages of archival records and historical evidence. We stood in the very places where violence once occurred and where communities gathered in remembrance. In every hearing, in every testimony, we heard echoes of both trauma and resilience," the report stated.

Maryland lawmakers last month approved a Maryland Reparations Commission, which would appoint 23 members to assess local, state, and federal policies from the Reconstruction and the Jim Crowe eras. The commission will recommend reparations ranging from cash compensation to a statement of apology.

SAN FRANCISCO MAYOR QUIETLY SIGNS REPARATIONS FUND THAT COULD LEAD TO \$5M PAYMENTS PER PERSON



The Maryland Senate panel. (Alex Wong/Getty Images)

Gov. Wes Moore, the state's first Black governor, stunned lawmakers when he vetoed the effort.

"I believe the time for action is now — and we must continue moving forward with the work of repair immediately," Moore [said in a statement via NBC](#). "That mission is especially vital given the immediate and ongoing effects of this federal administration on our constituents, including communities that have been historically left behind."

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The commission did not immediately respond to Fox News Digital's request for comment.

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