

I am writing in support of HF3850, the Minnesota Migration Act, which you will consider on Tuesday. This is an act to study and develop reparation proposals for descendants of chattel slavery who reside in Minnesota.

As a white person who grew up in Minnesota and Wisconsin, and now lives in Minneapolis as an adult, I enthusiastically welcome this bill and urge you to support it.

I know my ancestors from Europe worked hard to prosper and build modest generational wealth over time. However, I also know that Black Americans, who were brought here in chains and forced to endure unspeakable conditions of enslavement for two and a half centuries, worked extremely hard, but were not allowed to benefit from the fruits of their labor, then or for their descendants.

We also know that even after slavery was abolished in this country, Black Americans have faced countless barriers (many overtly and others covertly designed specifically to keep Black people from thriving) that white people have not had to face. This is true up here in the North, as well, despite many Minnesotans choosing to believe that all the problems were just in the South. The 1919 lynchings in Duluth, through to the redlining and racial covenants, and of course the appropriation of Black-owned housing and businesses to build I-94 and I-35W, are a few examples here in Minnesota.

It is time to talk seriously about repairing this damage. White people with good consciences lament "persistent educational achievement gaps," "health care inequities," "the low rates of Black home ownership," and other enduring effects of enslavement. The MN Migration Act would start us on the road to a comprehensive examination of what happened, and a plan for setting things right. Repairing this damage may take another century, and it is high time to get started.

I urge you to pass the MN Migration Act out of your committee so that it can be considered by the full House in this session.

Thank you,

Megan Swoboda
Minneapolis, MN

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Pronouns: she/her/hers