

# N'COBRA

## National Coalitions of Blacks for Reparations in America

### N'COBRA August 21, 2022 Member Meeting Summary

“THANK YOU” to you N'COBRA Supporters! As the newest Co-Chairs of NCOBRA, we have news and updates about NCOBRA's progress and, particularly, our Membership Meeting held on Sunday, August 21st. In addition to you, 135 people registered for the meeting and 75 people actually participated. This is your update!

The meeting touched on various subjects, and opened with National Co-Chair Sis. Kenniss Henry providing a prayerful message and acknowledgment of elders, ancestors, Mother Earth and Universal Spirit. She noted that the meeting audience included people from various states, from California to Mississippi to Maine, as well as the countries of Ghana, London and Canada. Bro. Woullard Lett, National Male Co-Chair, officiated the swearing in of new National Board of Directors officers and members:

1. Kenniss Henry, National Female Co-Chair
2. Dr. Greg Carr, At-Large Member
3. Uuka Elegba, National Treasurer
4. James Rodgers III, Membership Commission
5. Esther Stanford-Xosei, Female Co-Chair, International Commission
6. Fatimah Peery-Smith, Elder Council
7. Queen Mother Mashariki Jywanza, Elder Council

At-Large Board member Robin Rue Simmons and Elder Council members Adjoa Aiyetoro and Sababu Shabaka were not present for this formal induction, although Bro. Shabaka later joined the meeting. Recognition of the fulfilling of these roles featured each stalwart activist reciting together, in unison, NCOBRA's Oath of Office.

Next, International Commission Co-Chair, Sis. Esther Stanford-Xosei, who called in from London, **shared important news** on the Global Reparations event held in Accra, Ghana. She reported that a local NCOBRA member was able to attend meetings and events associated with the Forum. The fact that he was there representing NCOBRA surprised many, since the Forum was a project of Rockefeller Foundation, MacArthur Foundation and several other wealthy philanthropies that did not officially invite NCOBRA.

Sis. Kenniss provided a Congressional Report, describing her outreach to various Congress representatives and Senators to effect support for passage of HR 40, the bill to study and consider remedies for Reparations. Currently, there are 215 House cosponsor supporters and 23 Senate supporters of our Reparatory Justice Advocacy efforts. House Leadership voted to pass legislation that Juneteenth would become a national holiday, while ignoring the loud request to move HR 40 to the floor for debates. Please note, Juneteenth as a national holiday costs taxpayers \$825M annually but HR 40 costs \$20M annually and House Leadership would not move towards standing up the HR 40 Commission called for in the bill. Our Coalition has request that the President give us an HR 40 Executive Order, but none of our collective efforts have gotten us what we asked for.

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The National Treasurer Uuka Elegba then provided the Treasurer's Report, which clarified NCOBRA's financial position. He fielded questions concerning the NCOBRA Retreat Center located in Magnolia, Miss. and clarified NCOBRA's tax status related to the states in which we operate. For example, although NCOBRA is a nonprofit, we pay employment-related taxes to New Jersey, because our two new staff members reside there. In addition to supporting our nine commissions and five NCOBRA regions in their work, the Treasurer explained that we used grant funds to acquire the Retreat Center. Our Board visits twice yearly, and other groups have also retreated to this wonderful, healing space. The Center environment supports social justice advocates in self-healing, as we address the scars and woundedness that result from battling racism, ostracism, and other kinds of oppression.

The Male Co-Chair Bro. Woullard reported on NCOBRA's recent grants and awards. Funders include Liberated Ventures, Liberation Capital, Noon Whistle Fund, and the MacArthur Foundation. These supporters reflect our alliances with the "abolitionist" philanthropy sector. Bro. Woullard described the relationship we have with our largest funder, the MacArthur Foundation, and the fiscal sponsor that we are working with, Institute of the Black World 21st Century. The latter possess the 501(c)(3) tax exempt status that enabled us to receive MacArthur's grant.

The meeting wrapped up with questions and comments from the audience. Sis. Nkechi Taifa, an NCOBRA Lifetime Member, lawyer and educator, announced the first monthly "Reparations meet-up" held online on Aug. 30th. Many NCOBRA leaders participated and the event was a successful opportunity for activists to network and cross-pollinate. Bro. Zayid Muhammad, Regular Member reported on powerful Black August activities in Brooklyn, NY, featuring tributes to Marcus Garvey and more. His "principal organization" is the Malcolm X Commemoration Committee and he announced a special Eventbrite event featuring guest speakers Sis Nkechi Taifa and Dr Julius Garvey. The meeting chat was populated with dynamic questions about NCOBRA's status with IRS, relationship with former National Male Co-Chair Kamm Howard, transparency, youth resigning due to unanswered questions, and comments about the welcome fresh air that having the meeting provided.

Normally, NCOBRA's official Membership Meetings are held once a year at convention. We definitely see the opportunity in hosting additional membership meetings, and are now considering doing so to better align with quarterly Board meetings, as a post Board meeting report-out.

In fact, to support more dialogue, NCOBRA's staff intends to host Community Conversations on Reparations. The first session will be on Thursday, September 29th at 7PM ET. The topic is MONEY. This will be an open forum for our people to discuss our relationship with greenbacks, given that we used to be a form of capital. As we prepare for Reparations, we must deconstruct our often dysfunctional relationship with money and wealth! This will be a virtual meeting, so if you don't have Internet access, plan now to participate with someone who does. Register for the meeting link [here](#).

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## **National Coalitions of Blacks for Reparations in America**

In the meantime, we would love to hear from you, and we are thankful you support our mission to receive Reparations in our lifetime.

Asante sana and many blessings,

Sis. Kenniss Henry, Female Co-Chair

Bro. Woullard Lett, Male Co-Chair