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# City of Detroit

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**TO:** Detroit City Council

**FROM:** David D. Whitaker, Esq.   
Legislative Policy Division Staff

**DATE:** October 1, 2021

**RE:** **Reparations Ballot Initiative**

This report is in response to the request for The Legislative Policy Division to provide an overview City Council sponsored ballot initiative addressing possible reparations for the November 2, 2021, election.

The ballot initiative reads as follows:

Should the City of Detroit establish a Reparations Committee to make recommendations for housing and economic development programs that address historical discrimination against the Black community in Detroit?

The ballot initiative is straightforward in its intention. If approved, a Reparations Committee would be established with the purpose of making recommendations for programs to address the systematic and unjust enslavement and discrimination of Black people in Detroit. The suggested programs would focus on housing and economic development initiatives to combat some of the effects of the following past practices:

- segregation, unjust incarceration and racially-motivated discriminatory practices that have negatively impacted the economic opportunities of the City's Black citizens; and
- past housing practices that were used to deny housing opportunities through racist practices in the public land use arena and the private realty markets, including redlining, steering, blockbusting, denial of mortgages, gentrification and urban renewal.