



As atrocious and inhumane as slavery was, this Senate resolution was not mentioned on one major news television outlet in America.

The U.S. Senate on Thursday, June 18, 2009, passed a resolution apologizing to African-Americans for the wrongs of slavery. The nonbinding resolution sponsored by Senator Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, is similar to a House resolution adopted in 2008 that acknowledged the wrongs of slavery but offered no reparations.

The House will have to vote on the issue again because the composition of that chamber changed after the November 2008 elections. The resolution was approved on a voice vote.

Because it is nonbinding, it does not have to be forwarded to the President of the United States for his signature. Several states have passed similar resolutions, but the House resolution was

the first time a branch of the federal government did so.

Harkin's resolution acknowledges the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality and inhumanity of slavery, and Jim Crow laws, and apologizes to African-Americans on behalf of the people of the United States for the wrongs committed against them and their ancestors who suffered under slavery and Jim Crow laws.

Jim Crow laws were state and local laws enacted mostly in U.S. Southern and border states between the 1870s and 1965 that denied African-Americans the right to vote and other civil liberties, as well as legally segregated them from whites.

Some members of the African-American community have called on lawmakers to give cash payments or other financial benefits to descendants of slaves as compensation for the suffering caused by slavery.

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