

Introduced by: Senator Moreland (Sophomore) with the GU272 Advocacy Team: Hannah Michael (Sophomore), Mélisande Short-Colomb (Sophomore), Shepard Thomas (Junior), Aly Pachter (Senior), Karla Leyja (Senior), Darcy Palder (Sophomore), Fax Victor (Senior), Jessica Richards (Junior), Chukwuma Okoro (Junior)

Co-Sponsored by: Jamyson Smith (Freshman), Connor Brennan (Freshman), Karan Chauhan (Freshman), Dylan Hughes (Senior)

Georgetown University Student Association

In the school year 2018-2019

An ACT OF REFERENDUM to Establish a New GU272 Legacy and Create the Reconciliation Contribution

Section 1. Be it ENACTED that *the following referendum shall be submitted to the undergraduate student body of Georgetown University:*

From their earliest beginnings, the Maryland Jesuits and Georgetown University benefited from—and depended upon—the enslavement of Africans and African Americans. In 1838, *the Society of Jesus* decided to save Georgetown from bankruptcy by selling 272 children, women, and men down the river to southern Louisiana sugar plantations. Today, many of the direct descendants of these 272 people still live in southern Louisiana, and in underprivileged communities like Maringouin (where only 14 percent of residents have attained a bachelor’s degree or higher, and the average household income is \$36,518, well below the national median income, which hit a record high of \$57,617 in 2016).

In fall of 2016, the Georgetown University Working Group on Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation published its [report](#) and recommendations for how the University should address this shameful history. To date, Georgetown has implemented only some of them. Among the recommendations left unfulfilled are the establishment of financial-aid for the descendant community, the creation of public memorials to the enslaved persons, and the continuation of the “Freedom and Remembrance” Grant Program.

As students at an elite institution, we recognize the great privileges we have been given, and wish to at least partially repay our debts to those families whose involuntary sacrifices made these privileges possible. As individuals with moral imagination, we choose to do more than simply recognize the past—we resolve to change our future. And since we truly wish to “go, set the world on fire,” we choose to do so in this place, on this day, and with this ballot. And, echoing the words of the Working Group’s report, “while we acknowledge that the moral debt of slaveholding and the sale of the enslaved people can never be repaid, we are convinced that reparative justice requires a

meaningful financial commitment.”

Whereas the families of the 272 children, women, and men sold in 1838—and the recommendations made by the Working Group on Slavery, Memory, and Reconciliation—have been neglected and forgotten for too long, the creation of a GU272 Reconciliation Contribution is both necessary and proper. Therefore, the GUSA Senate proposes the following:

1. Beginning in Fall 2020, a GU272 Reconciliation Contribution will become a semesterly fee, separate from, but similar to the Student Activities Fee;
2. The Contribution will initially be \$27.20 in fall of 2020, in honor of the 272 people sold by Georgetown, and in recognition of their involuntary role in the founding and preservation of our University. In subsequent years, the Reconciliation Contribution will increase by the rate of inflation as used in the Student Activities Fee.
3. The proceeds of the GU272 Reconciliation Contributions will be allocated for charitable purposes directly benefiting the descendants of the GU272 and other persons once enslaved by the Maryland Jesuits—with special consideration given to causes and proposals directly benefiting those descendants still residing in proud and underprivileged communities, such as in Maringouin.
4. The allocations will be made by a GU272 Reconciliation Board of Trustees as governed by its [charter](#) established in the summer of 2019.

I support the creation of a GU272 Reconciliation Contribution and the allocation of its proceeds by a GU272 Reconciliation Board of Trustees in the manner and for the charitable purposes described above.

YES

NO

Section 2. *The following rules shall govern the above referendum:*

1. Voting on the referendum will be open for at least at least 24 hours, concurrently with the spring Senate elections of 2019.
2. The GUSA Election Commission shall conduct the referendum.
3. All University rules and regulations regarding advertising and campaigning shall apply to this referendum.

Certification

We hereby certify that the foregoing legislation was duly considered by the Senate at a meeting at which quorum was present and that the same was approved by a vote of 20 in favor and 4 opposed, this 3rd day of February, 2019.

Eliza Faye Lafferty
Speaker

Patrick Walsh
Vice Speaker

I hereby sign this legislation into law.

Juan J. Martinez Guevara
President of the Student Association