

City Sued After It Rolls Out Reparations: 'There's a Right Way and a Wrong Way'

A conservative watchdog group has filed a lawsuit against an Illinois city that recently announced plans to pay out reparations to black residents.

The Reparations Committee of Evanston, Illinois, announced last week that it was moving forward with a plan to pay out sizable reparations to black residents.

In total, \$1.1 million would be doled out, amounting to \$25,000 payments to 44 individuals.

The 44 individuals are descendants of people who claimed that they experienced housing discrimination in Evanston between 1919 and 1969.

Given how touchy a subject reparation payments can be, this decision engendered a lot of critical discourse.

It also engendered a lawsuit, according to Fox News.

Judicial Watch, the aforementioned watchdog, has officially filed a complaint in response to these reparations moving forward.

"There's a right way and a wrong way to do them," Michael Bekesha, a senior attorney at Judicial Watch, said. "So reparations are to repair. And so we have provided in this country reparations in the past when somebody has been wronged by the government, and we try to make that person whole."

He further noted, "The reparations programs that you're seeing around the country that are being talked about aren't that. They are just entirely giving money, usually to Black residents solely on the basis of race.

"And I mean, that's just problematic."

Judicial Watch is representing five plaintiffs that are taking specific issue with the fact that race was an eligibility requirement for these reparations.

Furthermore, Judicial Watch alleged that using race as an eligibility requirement is in direct violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Bekesha argued that the five plaintiffs, if not "for the color of their skin, would be eligible for \$25,000."

"The Equal Protection Clause is that the government can't discriminate against citizens based on their race or gender or national origin," Bekesha explained. "The government shouldn't pick winners and losers based on characteristics that are completely separate from whether or not somebody has been harmed or injured."

And what exactly is Judicial Watch striving for?

"The best outcome would be for the court to declare the policy unconstitutional, prevent the city of Evanston from providing any more reparations payments based on race, and make whole any non-Black resident or descendant of a resident who, you know, would be otherwise eligible for the payment," Bekesha said.

Evanston officials did not comment on the matter due to pending litigation.

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