



BlackEconomics.org®

“Reparations Sub-Strategy One: IRPs or EEPs”

Comedian and “philosopher/pundit” Bill Maher made a key point during a recent hour-long chat with Chris Cuomo on CNN.¹ Maher said that (paraphrasing) it is amazing how the nation went from near total opposition to “Homosexual marriage” to legal and social acceptance of “Same Sex marriage” over about a 20-year period.²

Given this astonishing turn of events, we should ask: “How did this occur?” The answer, at least in part, is because a strategy was adopted by those in favor of “Homosexual marriage” (the LGBTQIA Community) to make it an American reality.

They undertook a persistent and ingenious lobbying effort to transform voters’ opinions on the topic. Of course, they did not have to win over all voters, just enough to carry the day. Just enough so that the nation’s elected legislative and judicial officials understood that if they opposed the idea, then they would not be elected or reelected.

Take note that one critical strategic tactic was to change the label: From “Homosexual marriage” to “Same Sex marriage.” This

simple and subtle change in reference was enough to make “Homosexual marriage” less contentious and reduced opposition to what was viewed as immoral from the beginning of the Christian World.

Black Americans should be just as wise when it comes to Reparations. Currently, there is considerable opposition to the US Government (the party responsible for the deeds for which repair must be made) making Reparations payments to Black Americans. However, there is not total opposition. In other words, Black Americans may not face as steep a hill as those who strategized to make “Same Sex marriage” legally and socially acceptable in the country.

As we develop our strategy to overcome opposition to Reparations, maybe we should take a page from the book of “Same Sex marriage” strategists. Maybe we should scrap the label/term “Reparations.”

Many who oppose Reparations today will tell you that their opposition is because they are not responsible for the sins of their ancestors. This hints that revising or reorienting the

¹ The Cuomo-Maher interview was broadcast on CNN on Wednesday, November 17, 2021 as part of the “Cuomo Prime Time” program.

² We must admit that a similar statement was made during a recent telephone conversation with our fellow contributor at BlackEconomics.org, Mr.

Lindsey “Rob” Robinson. Therefore, discussion of this astonishing turn of events must have been in the public domain—and probably should not be attributed solely to Maher.

terminology might aid us in securing enough support for Reparations to make it a reality.³

What are our options. Let us consider, as a starting point, transforming the reference from “Reparations Payments” to simply “Inequality Reducing Payments” (IRPs) or “Equality Enhancing Payments” (EEPs).

If this simple and subtle change can lower the stigma for Reparations payments and can diffuse opposition to them, then we should adopt this strategy.

At the same time, many advocates for Reparations (including some Black economists) argue that an integral tenet of Reparations is to have the guilty party own up to (apologize for) the egregious wrongs that were promulgated against Black Americans. They might say that changing the reference obviates this important requirement. We retort that—strictly from an economic perspective and considering the time value of money—if retaining a particular reference

precludes an agreement on issuing payments, then better to change the reference and obtain the payments than to forego payments altogether. Obtain the payments, then work to obtain an apology.

Nothing says that changing the reference from Reparations Payments to seemingly innocuous terms, such as IRPs or EEPs, will ultimately yield the payments that we so richly deserve. However, we should certainly consider making such a change, along with developing an overarching strategy for reducing opposition to Reparations payments.

Adopting an IRPs or EEPs reference could be a particularly important Reparations sub-strategy that makes receipt of payments a reality for Black Americans.⁴

B Robinson
120921

--

³ It is worth noting that US Public Law 100-383 (the so-called “Civil Liberties Act of 1988”), which provided for payments to US citizens/residents of Japanese descent for imprisonment in internment camps during World War II, does not include the word “Reparations.” Rather, the payments are deemed to be “restitution payments;”

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-102/pdf/STATUTE-102-Pg903.pdf> (Ret. 120921).

⁴ While the inference may be to cash payments, please note that BlackEconomics.org advocates for Reparations payments in the form of land, materiel, and international support. See “[A Broad Three-Point Reparations Program for US Afrodescendants Versus CARICOM’s 10-Point Program.](#)”