

[moguldom.com /274481/william-a-darity-racial-disparities-of-coronavirus-underscore-need-for-reparations/](https://moguldom.com/274481/william-a-darity-racial-disparities-of-coronavirus-underscore-need-for-reparations/)

## William A. Darity: Racial Disparities Of Coronavirus Underscore Need For Reparations

Written by Ann Brown

4-5 minutes



Racial disparities of the coronavirus pandemic underscore the need for reparations, according to reparations activist William A. Darity. A person wearing a protective face mask as a precaution against the coronavirus walks past a shuttered business in Philadelphia, Thursday, April 23, 2020. (AP Photo/Matt Rourke)

William A. Darity Jr. and A. Kirsten Mullen have long fought for reparations for the descendants of the American slave trade. And now Darity, a professor at Duke University, and Mullen, a lecturer whose work focuses on race, art, history, and politics, say that the racial disparities of the COVID-19 pandemic point out the need for reparations.

In an opinion piece for [The Philadelphia Inquirer](#), [Darity](#) and Mullen made their argument that attention needs to be refocused on reparations.

At the beginning of campaigning by the 2020 presidential Democrats, most candidates had a plan for or an opinion on reparations. There was even the [Juneteenth televised House Judiciary Committee hearing](#) on a bill to establish a study commission for reparations to African Americans.

But, "attention has receded. The remaining Democratic Party candidate shows little enthusiasm for the policy, and President Donald Trump has dismissed it," wrote Darity and Mullen, who [co-authored](#) the book "[From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the 21st Century](#)."

They argue that the COVID-19 crisis only highlights the need for reparations.

"Racial divergence in the impact of COVID-19 — which is proving deadliest for Black Americans in Philadelphia and beyond — powerfully reinforces the importance of reparations," they wrote.

The wealth disparities before the pandemic caused major obstacles for the Black community, and now during the crisis, the wealth gap is costing lives. [Black people are dying a higher rate](#) from coronavirus and many experts say it is due to the wealth gap because Black people live in communities that have environmental hazards, are more prone to underlying conditions and tend not to be able to afford top-quality health care.

"But another critical adverse precondition lies at the heart of Black-white difference in health outcomes: excess Black financial precarity, captured best by the chasm in racial wealth," Darity and Mullen wrote.

"An important commentary from the Center of American Progress outlined the ways [wealth protects against want](#), and how its absence dooms Blacks to destitution. Prior to the pandemic, only 45 percent of Black households could pay a \$400 emergency expense and meet bills, as opposed to 60 percent of white households. The pandemic magnifies that financial vulnerability. Wealthy households have a greater capacity to ride out storms of unexpected adversity, including job loss, medical emergencies, and other income shocks," Darity and Mullen stressed.

Listen to GHOGH with Jamarlin Martin | Episode 70: [Jamarlin Martin](#) Jamarlin goes solo to discuss the COVID-19 crisis. He talks about the failed leadership of Trump, Andrew Cuomo, CDC Director Robert Redfield, Surgeon General Jerome Adams, and New York Mayor de Blasio.

It will require \$10 trillion to \$12 trillion to raise Black people's share of the nation's wealth to match their proportion in the population, according to Darity and Mullen. This would be an average of about \$800,000 per household.

They point out three white billionaires who exemplify the disparity. Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, and Warren Buffett hold more wealth than 80 percent of Black Americans, Darity and Mullen said.

The congressional appropriation of the \$2.2 trillion economic rescue bill in March is proof that the federal government can rapidly find the money when there is a will and a moral imperative to do so, they said. "Acting to bolster falling American incomes is an admirable step. It also does not obviate the 155-year obligation to Black America."

