

Slavery Remembrance Day Program

Friends, thank you for your participation. If you can, please join me by standing and placing your right hand over your heart to show our heartfelt sorrow for the millions who suffered the horrors of slavery.

Over the next few minutes, we will recall various well documented aspects of the experiences of American slaves.

At the end of each of these summarized experiences I will say the words **‘we must’**:

Immediately after I say, **‘we must’** I would like you (**each of you**) to, in unison, say **‘always remember’**.

Let's begin.

To prevent the evils of slavery from being repeated **we must:**

Always remember.

To commemorate the suffering and the lives lost because of slavery **we must:**

Always remember.

For the first 20 enslaved Africans who arrived in the British colonies at Point Comfort near what is now Norfolk Virginia on August 20, 1619 **we must:**

Always remember.

For the **12 million** humans from all walks of life whose lives were stolen from them when they were kidnapped from Africa **we must:**

Always remember.

For the Africans sold into slavery by other Africans **we must:**

Always remember.

For the **12 percent** of human beings who suffered the deadly middle passage and did not survive the horrific voyage to America **we must:**

Always remember.

For the men, women, and children on slave ships many of whom kept naked, packed close together with many shackled and chained **we must:**

Always remember.

For enslaved human beings who often worked from sunup to after sundown, **6** to **7** days a week often without food **we must:**

Always remember.

For the mothers and fathers who were separated from their children and sold on the auction blocks **we must:**

Always remember.

For the freedom fighters such as Nat Turner who fought to free enslaved people; who gave their lives in the fight for freedom and justice **we must:**

Always remember.

For the **tens of thousands** of slaves who risked their lives in search of freedom on the Underground Railroad **we must:**

Always remember.

For freedom fighters such as Harriet Tubman, who escaped slavery and dedicated her life to returning to the South no less than **13** times freeing enslaved men women and children, **we must:**

Always remember.

For the white liberators like John Brown and President Abraham Lincoln who lived and died combatting the horrific institution of Slavery **we must:**

Always remember.

To commemorate the centuries of suffering, the years of tears shed, the history of hearts broken, the brutality of blood spilled, and the grieving over lives lost because of slavery **we must:**

Always remember.

Yet, In the spirit of righteous remembrance imbued with love for our country that hasn't always loved its brothers and sisters of African ancestry, we have to **acknowledge that:**

In spite of slavery and despite its invidious offsprings: mass lynchings, convict leasing, black codes, lawful segregation, and institutional racism, African Americans have come a laudably long way.

- From our arrival on slave ships to our ascension to judge ships,
- From surviving the middle passage to thriving among the masses,
- From shackled in chains to creating societal change,

- From sitting in the back of buses to owning bus companies,
- From having no house to living in the White House,
- From painfully picking cotton, to proudly picking presidents,
- From adult males and females being disrespectfully called boy and girl to being respectfully presented as Mr. President and Madam Vice President,

The truth be told although we have come a long way, we still have a way to go.

In closing let us resolve that as we forge forward we will commemorate our past and embrace our destiny, always remembering the hardships people of African heritage have endured in tandem with the victories won in spite of the seemingly invincible challenges emanating from insidious slavery and its invidious progenies!

Through it all we must:

Always Remember.

We must:

Always Remember.

We must:

Always Remember.

If you can, I would ask that you participate in a moment of silent solemnity at noon on August 20th wherever you may be. During this moment, wherever you are, place your right hand over your heart and with a moment of silent solemnity, give thoughts the millions who toiled and lost their lives under Slavery, and lovingly utter the phrase **‘I Remember’**.