

A New NAREB Study Reveals the Devastating Impact of Biased Heirs' Property Policies & Practices on Black Families

The majority of land lost is farmland that was painstakingly acquired by Blacks in the years immediately following the emancipation of enslaved Black people

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, January 14, 2025

/EINPresswire.com/ -- The [National Association of Real Estate Brokers](#) (NAREB) today released a study entitled "Heirs' Property in the United States - Its Destabilizing Structure and Contribution to Black Property and Wealth Erosion." Conducted by a team of experienced researchers, [the study](#) meticulously documents the discriminatory policies and practices that have facilitated the loss of property, farmland, and generational wealth for African Americans from the end of slavery to the present day.



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When land is maintained as heirs' property, all descendants hold fractional ownership, making the property vulnerable to legal challenges, forced sales, and exploitation by developers or outside parties. Exploitative and illegal actions resulted in Black families losing 90% of the land held in 1910 because of limited access to legal advice, discriminatory actions by federal, state, and local governments, and violence and hate crimes.

“As this comprehensive study demonstrates, public policies have aided private and public entities in the unscrupulous

and predatory acquisition of land owned by Black families, creating a long history of land theft from the Black community,” asserts Dr. Courtney Johnson Rose, NAREB’s President. “Heirs’ property issues disproportionately impact Black households, thereby making the need for urgent reforms as important today as they were a century ago.”

The study, conducted by James Carr and Michela Zonta, finds that historical and contemporary loss of Black heirs’ property is a significant contributor to the Black-White racial wealth gap,

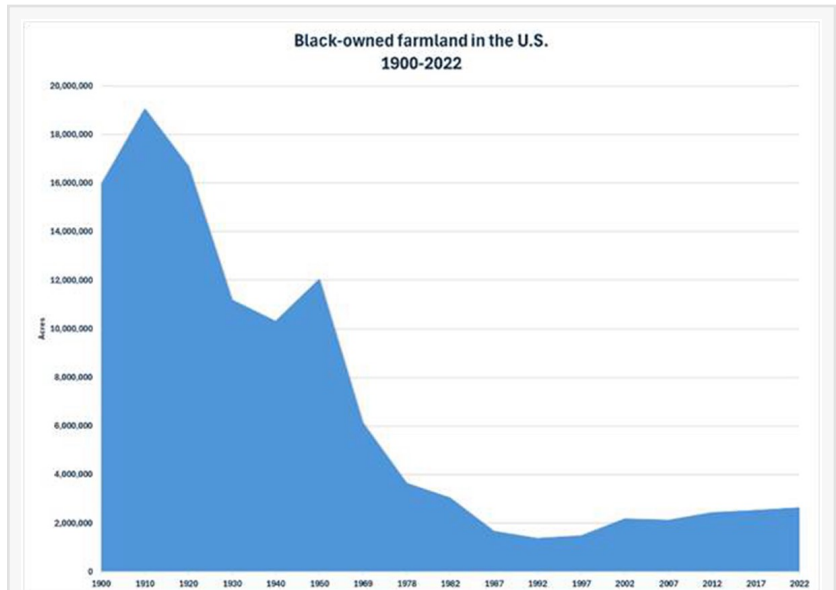
joining federally mandated housing discrimination and other damaging federal urban policies in contributing to the loss of billions of dollars of Black wealth.

It states that farmland once owned by Black farmers has routinely been absorbed by White owners and has often merged into larger estates that would attract the attention of Wall Street investors. "One historically significant example is Kiawah Island, South Carolina, known today for its luxurious resorts but previously home to Blacks after the Civil War when many formerly enslaved people acquired land there," the study states. "Kiawah Island is only one of thousands of examples of critical land loss by, and economic exploitation of, Black families that has occurred throughout the United States over the past century. "

As in the case of federally mandated discriminatory homeownership practices against Black households, the study maintains that the loss of Black heirs' property has frequently been supported or carried out by government entities. "Discriminatory practices related to Heirs' property continue today," the study says. "Only a small number of Black farmers have managed to retain or reclaim their land, leaving the majority without ownership of valuable agricultural land, particularly in the Deep South."

The study also finds that:

- Blacks owned millions of acres more land a century ago than they hold today.
- The largest share of property owned by Blacks was farmland throughout the South, some of which is today among the most expensive property in the U.S.
- Discriminatory actions by the United States government over the past century contributed to



Dr. Courtney Johnson Rose, NAREB President

the loss of Black land and wealth on a level comparable with that inflicted by the discriminatory lending practices of the federal housing finance agencies established in the 1930s.

□ The disproportionate loss of Black property continues today due to heirs' property issues, including the lack of accurate estate planning documents ensuring the efficient transfer of Black property owners' rights to their heirs.

"The loss of that property has stifled the economic mobility of millions of Black Americans," says Dr. Rose. "The amount of property lost by Blacks translates into millions of acres, and the consequences extend beyond individual families to entire communities. The majority of land lost has been farmland that was painstakingly acquired by Blacks in the years immediately following the emancipation of enslaved Black people. Agricultural lands represent a significant economic asset, a cultural legacy, and a path to generational wealth. "

Moreover, she asserts, "The loss has disrupted livelihoods, eroded community stability, and diminished the economic impact of agricultural contributions from African American farmers."

Dr. Rose says that NAREB recognizes the collective effort needed to address this issue and vows to work with other organizations to help Black families reclaim and preserve their land and reverse decades of inequity. NAREB supports the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act, which makes it easier to pass family wealth to the next generation, and the National Heirs' Property Protection Legislation, the Empowerment and Inheritance Rights (HEIR) Act, the Heirs' Estate Inheritance Resolution and Succession (HEIRS) Act, and The Good DEED Act.

"As NAREB's report makes clear, tangled titles have an extraordinarily damaging impact on Black communities and their ability to build generational wealth," said Rep. Emanuel Cleaver II (D-Kansas City). "My legislation, The Good DEED Act, provides critically needed resources that will help document and secure Black land ownership, as well as protect the wealth and economic mobility of impacted families. I applaud NAREB for bringing attention to this important issue."

NAREB has also partnered with the National Bar Association (NBA) to help Black families understand the laws related to heirs' property and get legal representation. As part of NAREB's Black Wealth Tour, NAREB hosted NBA's "What to do with Big Mama's House" course in cities nationwide to inform families about heirs' property issues and provide resources.

"NAREB will advocate for a combination of public policy, education, and grassroots actions to protect our remaining land and ensure equitable opportunities moving forward," proclaims Dr. Rose. "This work is essential to honoring the legacy of past generations and empowering future ones."

For print or broadcast interviews with NAREB President Courtney Johnson Rose, contact Michael Frisby at Mike@frisbyassociates.com or 202-625-4328.)

ABOUT THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REAL ESTATE BROKERS

NAREB was formed in 1947 to secure equal housing opportunities regardless of race, creed, or color. NAREB has advocated for legislation and supported or instigated legal challenges that ensure fair housing, sustainable homeownership, and access to credit for Black Americans. Simultaneously, NAREB advocates for and promotes access to business opportunities for Black real estate professionals in each real estate discipline.

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