

Americans Divide Over Slavery Apology

Should the federal government apologize to black Americans for the slavery that once existed in this country? Americans divide on the question, with most blacks supporting an apology and a narrow majority of whites opposed.

Overall, 42 percent say the government should apologize and 49 percent say it should not. The sharpest division in this ABC News poll is along racial lines – 53 percent of whites oppose an apology, while two-thirds of blacks favor one.

Still, opposition to issuing an apology has eased somewhat, down from 56 percent in 1997. And the change was greatest among whites: A seven-point gain in support for an apology, and a 12-point drop in opposition.

	Apologize for Slavery?			
	Should		Should Not	
	Now	1997	Now	1997
All	42%	39	49	56
Whites	38	31	53	65
Blacks	66	67	24	27

The issue regained attention last month when Rep. Tony Hall (D-OH) introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives calling for a congressional apology to black Americans for slavery. (Hall unsuccessfully sought an apology three years ago.) And last week a Connecticut newspaper, The Hartford Courant, issued a front-page apology for profiting from ads for the sale of slaves.

GROUPS – Among groups, apart from blacks, support for an apology commands a majority of younger adults, age 18 to 34. It's also higher, but not quite a majority, among Democrats, lower-income and less-educated Americans.

	Should Apologize
Age 18-34	53%
Age 65+	33
Republican	28%
Independent	43
Democrat	50

Income <\$25K	49%
\$75K+	37

METHODOLOGY - This ABC News.com survey was conducted by telephone from June 28 to July 9, 2000, among a random national sample of 2,018 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Fieldwork by ICR- International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Dalia Sussman.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet at:

<http://www.abcnews.com/sections/us/PollVault/PollVault.html>

61. Do you think the federal government should or should not apologize to black Americans for the slavery that once existed in this country?

		Should	Should not	No opin.
7/9/00	All	42	49	9
	Whites	38	53	8
	Blacks	66	24	10
6/18/97	All	39	56	5
	Whites	31	65	4
	Blacks	67	27	6

END