

What is HR 453?

Ancestral family ties for African American's were disrupted as a consequence of the inhumane trafficking of Black Africans during the Transatlantic Slave Trade¹, making it difficult for a descendant of an enslaved person to trace back their ancestral origins. Although commercial products can make some connection, we assert that our research institutions have a greater mission to help reconnect Illinois' African-American population to its countries of origin. To address this gap, HR453 has been introduced to garner support for the proposed Family Roots Genealogy Pilot Program. The Family Roots Genealogy Pilot Program is being developed with the aim of providing Illinois African American descendants of enslaved individuals the opportunity to trace their roots back to their ancestral homelands through living distant relatives, and therefore be able to reconstruct their ancestral heritage, to promote their well-being.

How will this be done?

Around 15% of Black adults use consumer genetic genealogy tests in the United States. This pilot program is unique in that it will utilize autosomal DNA to estimate distant relatedness between African Americans and African individuals. Humans possess 23 pairs of chromosomes, with one pair determining biological sex and the remaining 22 pairs, known as autosomal chromosomes, carrying the bulk of our genetic information. Each person inherits half of these autosomal chromosomes from each parent. By analyzing autosomal DNA with contemporary advanced technologies, scientists can pinpoint distant relatives and trace shared ancestors as far back as 4 to 20 generations, potentially reaching the era of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.^{2,3}

FAQ

Who will run the pilot program?



Dr. LaKisha David, Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign will be the principal investigator for this pilot program.

How much will it cost?



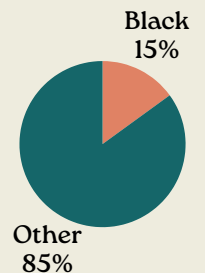
The pilot program will be federally and state funded and will be accessible at no cost to the participant.

What will happen to collected DNA samples?



After the DNA data results have been processed, the DNA sample will be destroyed and researchers will adhere to HIPAA-compliant security standards to store and secure the DNA data. Participants will be given the option to continue to participate in the research (e.g., continuing to identify more African relatives and estimating a very extended family tree that includes African relatives) after the close of the pilot program.

Around 15% of Black adults pay for consumer genetic genealogy tests in the United States.



References

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