APOLOGIES FOR SLAVERY

Six states have apologized for their historical roles in supporting slavery. Florida became the most recent state to adopt a resolution expressing the Legislature's "profound regret for Florida's role in sanctioning and perpetuating involuntary servitude upon generations of African slaves." Alabama, Maryland, North Carolina, New Jersey and Virginia have previously done so. Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska are considering resolutions.

Virginia was the first to enact a resolution, in February 2007. It was also the state with the largest slave population in the country in 1860.
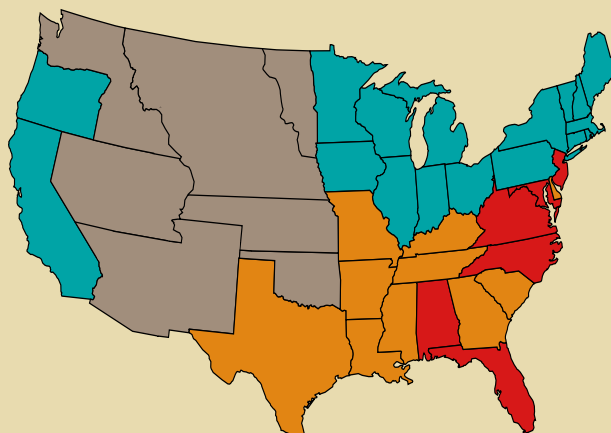
Although all six state resolutions passed with almost unanimous approval, there was debate over whether these apologies might lead to calls for reparations—payments to descendants of slaves.

Congress has not yet passed any kind of apology.

SLAVE OWNERS

Almost one-third of all Southern families owned slaves. In Mississippi and South Carolina it approached one half. The total number of slave owners was 385,000 in 1860. Here are the percentages of slave-owning families as a fraction of total free households.

MISSISSIPPI: 49%

SOUTH CAROLINA: 46%

GEORGIA: 37%

ALABAMA: 35%

FLORIDA: 34%

LOUISIANA: 29%

TEXAS: 28%

NORTH CAROLINA: 28%

VIRGINIA: 26%

TENNESSEE: 25%

KENTUCKY: 23%

ARKANSAS: 20%

MISSOURI: 13%

MARYLAND: 12%

DELAWARE: 3%

Source: Census archive site at the University of Virginia.

SLAVERY IN 1860

Six states have apologized for their role in slavery.

- 🟥 Slave states that have apologized for slavery*
- 🟧 Slave states that have not apologized for slavery
- 🟦 Free states
- ⬜ U.S. territories

*Virginia has apologized, West Virginia has not.   Source: Stateline.org

NUMBER OF SLAVES IN 1860

In the year before the Civil War began, census takers counted almost 4 million slaves working in 16 states and two territories. Mississippi and South Carolina had more slaves than free men and women.

State	Slave Population	Free Population
Virginia	490,865	1,105,453
Georgia	462,198	505,088
Mississippi	436,631	354,674
Alabama	435,080	519,121
South Carolina	402,406	301,302
Louisiana	331,726	376,276
North Carolina	331,099	661,563
Tennessee	275,719	834,082
Kentucky	225,483	930,201
Texas	182,566	421,649
Missouri	114,931	1,067,081
Arkansas	111,115	324,335
Maryland	87,189	599,860
Florida	61,745	78,679
Delaware	1,798	110,418
New Jersey	18	672,017
Nebraska Territory	15	28,826
Kansas Territory	2	107,204

Source: Stateline.org, U.S. Census, 1860.