



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Rep. Bowen Statement on 400th Anniversary of American Slave Trade
“Black America’s Most Enduring Feature is its Resilience”

MILWAUKEE - State Rep. David Bowen (D-Milwaukee) released the following statement in recognition of the 400th anniversary of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade reaching American shores:

“400 years ago today, over twenty enslaved Africans were sold in exchange for food at Point Comfort, Virginia, marking the first recorded time African slaves were sold in what would become the United States of America. While the names of most of those slaves who were sold that day have been lost to history, the legacy of that fateful day has shaped all of American history and still affects Black communities in 2019. As some have noted, although we may traditionally trace our nation’s birth to 1776, 1619 would be a better place to start,” said Rep. Bowen.

On August 20, 1619, the Dutch ship *White Lion* landed in Point Comfort, Virginia, where the captain of the ship sold a number of slaves captured and brought over from the Kingdom of Ndongo in modern-day Angola. Although the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade had already been active for almost a century, the sale of these individuals was the first recorded time slaves had been sold on American soil, marking the beginning of nearly 250 years of slavery in the United States.

Continued Bowen, “But we cannot forget that, although the Black American experience may be one that was originally born of tragedy, Black America’s most enduring feature is its resilience. Even in the face of two-and-a-half centuries of slavery, another century of Jim Crow, and the systemic racism that continues today, Black America has gifted us artists, poets, businesspeople, scientists, politicians, musicians, academics, mothers, brothers, daughters, fathers, sons, and some of the most loving and hard-working communities you will ever meet. So today, we mourn the lost names, lives, and memories of those who came before us, who suffered through slavery and Jim Crow, but we also give thanks for the paths that they paved, the culture they preserved, and the stories they handed down to us. Just like diamonds formed under intense heat and pressure, 400 years on, Black America is vibrant, shining, and strong.”

To learn more about the legacy of 1619 and its lasting effects on American history and culture, you can visit the New York Times’ “[1619 Project](#),” an ongoing initiative that will examine 1619 and its importance to the American experience.
