

Sen. Drake: Wisconsin Legislative Black Caucus introduces constitutional amendment to ban slavery in Wisconsin

Posted on Tuesday, Feb 24, 2026

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Madison, WI - Today, the Wisconsin Legislative Black Caucus was proud to introduce 2025 LRB-6044, an amendment to the Wisconsin State Constitution that would ensure all forms of slavery and involuntary servitude are prohibited in Wisconsin without exception.

The Wisconsin Constitution prohibits slavery and involuntary servitude, but the constitution includes an exception to that prohibition if the slavery or involuntary servitude is imposed as punishment for a crime for which an individual has been duly convicted. LRB-6044 eliminates that exception.

The Wisconsin Legislative Black Caucus released the following joint statement:

“Over 160 years ago, the cruel and inhumane practice of chattel slavery was ended by the enactment of the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This amendment reads: ‘Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.’

As we celebrate Black History Month, it is important to celebrate the historic legacy of the 13th Amendment while also acknowledging the work we still must do to build a more racially-just society. We must reform the Wisconsin State Constitution to ensure all forms of slavery or involuntary servitude are abolished..

The removal of this abhorrent exception, which disproportionately affects Black Americans, is needed to uphold the dignity of all Wisconsinites and protect incarcerated individuals who could face mandatory work. In the year 2026 - it is finally time for Wisconsin to ban slavery once and for all.”