§ 57.51. Legislative findings. The legislature finds and declares that:

1. During the period beginning late in the fifteenth century through the nineteenth century, millions of persons of African origin were enslaved and brought to the Western Hemisphere, including the United States of America; anywhere from between twenty to fifty percent of enslaved Africans died during their journey to the Western Hemisphere; the enslavement of Africans and their descendants was part of a concerted effort of physical and psychological terrorism that deprived groups of people of African descent the opportunity to preserve many of their social, religious, political and other customs; the vestiges of slavery in this country continued with the legalization of second class citizenship status for African-Americans through Jim Crow laws, segregation and other similar practices; the legacy of slavery has pervaded the fabric of our society; and in spite of these events there are endless examples of the triumphs of African-Americans and their significant contributions to the development of this country.

2. All people should know of and remember the human carnage and dehumanizing atrocities committed during the period of the African slave trade and slavery in America and of the vestiges of slavery in this country; and it is in fact vital to educate our citizens on these events, the legacy of slavery, the sad history of racism in this country, and on the principles of human rights and dignity in a civilized society.

3. It is the policy of the state of New York that the history of the African slave trade, slavery in America, the depth of their impact in our society, and the triumphs of African-Americans and their significant contributions to the development of this country is the proper concern of all people, particularly students enrolled in the schools of the state of New York.

4. It is therefore desirable to create a state-level commission, which shall research and survey the extent to which the African slave trade and slavery in America is included in the curricula of New York state

schools, and make recommendations to the legislature and executive regarding the implementation of education and awareness programs in New York concerned with the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in this country, and the contributions of African-Americans in building our country. Such recommendations may include, but not be limited to, the development of workshops, institutes, seminars, and other teacher training activities designed to educate teachers on this subject matter; the coordination of events on a regular basis, throughout the state, that provide appropriate memorialization of the events concerning the enslavement of Africans and their descendants in America as well as their struggle for freedom and liberty; and suggestions for revisions to the curricula and textbooks used to educate the students of New York state to reflect a more adequate inclusion of issues identified by the commission.