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Office of the Principal Chief

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**Bryan Warner**  
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## **Executive Order Establishing the Principal Chief's Task Force Examining the Impact of Slavery on Cherokee Nation's 19<sup>th</sup> Century Economy**

**2025-04-CTH**

1. **Authority:** The Constitution and laws of the Cherokee Nation.
2. **Policy:** By [Executive Order 2020-05](#) (Order on Equality) and the [2024 Executive Order Addendum](#), it is in the best interest of the Cherokee Nation to ensure that equal opportunity and equal protection under the law are at the forefront of policy making, programs, and initiatives. It is the policies of the Principal Chief and the Executive Branch to take into account any historical acts of disenfranchisement, exclusion or unequal treatment of groups within Cherokee society, including Cherokee citizens of Freedmen descent. On Juneteenth of 2024, the Principal Chief's Task Force on Access to Programs and Services by Cherokee Citizens of Freedmen Descent finalized and released a [report](#) that examined the participation rates and access to services by Freedmen descents and proposed strategies and recommendations to address identified gaps and deficiencies. It is in Cherokee Nation's national interest to study and examine the impact of Black chattel slavery, beginning with a threshold examination of economic and infrastructure related subjects. Understanding the use of slave labor in building the Nation, both physically in terms of building structures but also the economy and socio-economic makeup of the Cherokee Nation, ensures this is included in the greater narrative of Cherokee history. Relatedly, Cherokee Nation must examine how slavery is depicted, interpreted and otherwise described at its historical sites and published materials. Therefore, the Principal Chief's Task Force to Examine the Impact of Slavery on Cherokee Nation's 19<sup>th</sup> Century Economy and Infrastructure is hereby established.

3. **The Principal Chief's Task Force to Examine the Impact of Slavery on Cherokee Nation's 19<sup>th</sup> Century Economy and infrastructure:** There is hereby established a Task Force, operating pursuant to the composition, objectives and other parameters set forth herein:

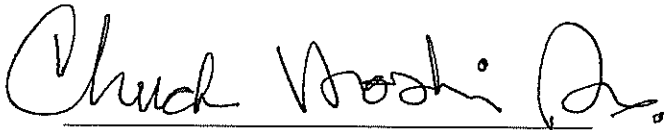
a.) **Composition:** The Task Force shall consist of the following members:

- i Melissa Payne, Cherokee Freedmen Community Liaison
- ii Travis Owens, Cherokee Nation Businesses, Vice President of Cultural Tourism
- iii Tralynna Scott, Cherokee Nation Special Envoy to U.S. Dept. of Treasury and CNB Chief Economist
- iv Ashawna Miles, Cherokee Nation Director of Self Governance
- v Shella Bowlin, Cherokee Nation Secretary of State
- vi Any member of the Cherokee Freedmen Art and History Project Committee, as nominee by said Committee

b.) **Objectives and Scope:** The Task Force shall be charged with, but not limited to, the following core objectives:

- i Examine the impact of Black chattel slavery on the 19<sup>th</sup> century Cherokee Nation economy and infrastructure development
- ii Examine historic auction, market and records data related to the sale of enslaved individuals
- iii Understanding the use of slave labor in the Cherokee Nation pre-removal
- iv The impact that slavery had on the socio-economic makeup of the Cherokee Nation
- v Use of slave labor during the forced removal of the Cherokee people
- vi Use of slave labor in the Cherokee Nation post-removal
- vii Cherokee Nation's intellectual ties to slavery
- viii The manner in which slavery is depicted, interpreted, presented or omitted at Cherokee owned and operated historic sites and Cherokee Nation authored and published works or other materials.
- ix Creation of a register for Cherokee Nation constructed buildings and structures constructed using slave labor

- x Make recommendations for further study of the aforementioned of related subjects.
  - xi Conduct the foregoing examination and threshold reviews, identifying basic facts, providing informative yet summary answers, raising questions or acknowledging the need for deeper inquiry.
- c.) **Deadline:** The Task Force shall complete its work and issue a final report by January 15, 2026, unless extended in writing by the Principal Chief.
- d.) **Transparency:** The Task Force is an executive branch advisory group and not a public body within the meaning of the Cherokee Nation Freedom of Information Act. The Task Force's final report shall be distributed to Cherokee Nation elected officials and to the general public via the Cherokee Nation website within 45 days of completion.
4. **Order:** It is hereby ordered that the Principal Chief's Task Force to Examine the Impact of Slavery on Cherokee Nation's 19<sup>th</sup> Century Economy is hereby established.
5. **Effective Date:** This Order is effective immediately on this 19<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2025.



Date: 6/19/2025

Chuck Hoskin, Jr.  
Cherokee Nation, Principal Chief