

## Short Takes with Sandy Darity Transcript

Deondra Rose:

From the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University, this is Ways & Means Short Takes, brief conversations to explore the podcast topics a bit more. We're creating this bonus content for each episode in season five.

Deondra Rose:

I'm Deondra Rose, Research Director for Polis, the Center for Politics at Duke University, Sanford School of Public Policy. Today I'm talking with my colleague, William Darity, Jr., about reparations.

Deondra Rose:

Hi, Sandy. Thanks so much for being with us today.

William "Sandy" Darity, Jr.:

Hi, Deondra. Glad to be here.

Deondra Rose:

Sandy, political scientists would argue that because reparations would require at least some sort of redistribution, we can expect very contentious politics around any kind of proposal. Is there a way to craft a reparations policy that that doesn't seem quite so redistributive?

William "Sandy" Darity, Jr.:

I'm going to cheat a little bit on this one because Kirsten Mullen and I have a new book coming out called *From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the Twenty-First Century* from the UNC Press, and it will be out in April. The final chapter is an attempt to sketch what a reparations program might actually look like. It includes a discussion of strategies for financing a reparations program that would obviate placing any kind of significant new tax burden on Americans, but I can't give you any more details than that at this point.

Deondra Rose:

Well, we will stay tuned. Can't wait to read your book. Congratulations for that.

William "Sandy" Darity, Jr.:

Thank you.

Deondra Rose:

I'd love to hear more about what the reparations planning committee would look like and what they would do. Could you tell us a little more about that?

William "Sandy" Darity, Jr.:

Well, the reparations planning committee actually exists. It's a group of scholars who are helping to try to design the actual reparations program, the historians, economists, media specialist or media analyst, a specialist on health inequities as well as criminal justice disparities. It's a pretty diverse group of scholars, but very committed to trying to create the best reparations plan that they can.

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William "Sandy" Darity, Jr.:

The premise here is if the Congress does in fact adopt a proposal like the one for House Resolution 40, which would put in place a commission that would be responsible for making the case for reparations and for actually designing our reparations plan, that the reparations planning committee could provide that commission with a template or a guide that they could use for the preparation of their report.

Deondra Rose:

Sandy, do you see educational institutions playing an important role in the success of reparations policy?

William "Sandy" Darity, Jr.:

Probably in two different ways. The first way is I think that one of the big issues that arises in thinking about reparations is the way in which we think about the history of the United States, particularly with respect to the Civil War and reconstruction. Educational institutions can play a vital role in providing us with a more accurate understanding of what occurred during those two phases of American history and what the implications are for the world in which we live today.

William "Sandy" Darity, Jr.:

There's a very direct kind of curricular or instructional dimension to what educational institutions can do, but with respect to those colleges and universities that have a history of direct complicity with slavery or with the lost cause, the thing that they can do is form a syndicate that would petition Congress for a national reparations program for Black American descendants of persons who were enslaved in the United States.

Deondra Rose:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). I have to ask this question, what is it like to take this topic on the road? I imagine that there's, I'm sure, never a dull moment when you're talking about reparations. Are there any behind the scenes stories that you can tell us?

William "Sandy" Darity, Jr.:

Not so much behind the scenes, but I receive questions that are truly offensive and it's very difficult for me to respond to those questions without displaying a certain degree of rage.

Deondra Rose:

Can you give us an example of maybe what some of those questions might be like?

William "Sandy" Darity, Jr.:

One example is a question that's frequently raised where people say, "Why not reparations for white northerners who fought in the Civil War and gave Black Americans their freedom?" Frequently we hear that. And then another question that comes up is a question concerning whether or not reparations should be paid to Black Americans since, after all, enslavement put them in the United States where their lives are so much better than folks on the African continent.

William "Sandy" Darity, Jr.:

Those two types of arguments are among the ones that probably give me the greatest degree of anger. It makes it very difficult for me to calmly respond to them, but I do my best.

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Deondra Rose:

Oh my goodness. Well, thank you for sharing that with us.

William "Sandy" Darity, Jr.:

Thanks for having me.

Deondra Rose:

Thanks for joining us today for Ways & Means Short Takes. Sandy Darity is the Samuel DuBois Cook professor of public policy. Do you have a question about reparations? Email us at [waysandmeansshow](mailto:waysandmeansshow@duke.edu), all one word, @duke.edu.

Deondra Rose:

Next week on Ways & Means we'll be talking about news deserts and how good sources of information are critical to our democracy. See you then.