

AN ACT concerning State government.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Illinois America 250 Commission Act.

Section 5. Findings. The General Assembly finds that:

(a) Illinois became the 21st state on December 3, 1818, 42 years after the formation of the United States of America and after thousands of years of Indigenous communities and peoples inhabiting the land.

(b) Illinois figured prominently in the expansion of the United States of America as the scene of extensive French and British exploration and early economic generation with the fur trade, serving as a frontier boundary for Westward expansion, and as a place of forced removal of Indigenous nations.

(c) The historic and contemporary systems of inequality produced through the enslavement of African American people in Illinois must be acknowledged. Though the 1848 State Constitution declared slavery to be illegal, the practice of enslaving African Americans continued in Illinois, as did participation in kidnapping and enslaving African Americans to benefit Illinois' economy. Even following the abolition of slavery, the 1908 Race Riot in Springfield led to the

slaughter of free African Americans and destroyed their communities within the Illinois State capital city.

(d) Illinois was a key state in the American Civil War, deploying over 250,000 soldiers to fight in the war. Illinois served as the home of Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States of America. Illinois was the first State to ratify the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery.

(e) Millions of people have emigrated from and immigrated to Illinois, or sought refuge in our State, bringing with them their culture, lifeways, knowledge, and labor, which has shaped Illinois into one of the nation's most diverse states. With its largest city in Illinois, and the 3rd largest in the nation, founded by a Black man, John Baptiste Point du Sable, more than 110,000 African Americans came to Illinois as a part of the Great Migration from the South through the advocacy of Robert Abbott's Chicago Defender distributed by the Pullman Porters. Illinois has proudly been made home by immigrants and their descendants from Ireland, Italy, China, Poland, Eastern Europe, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Japan, Central and South America, Russia, Somalia, Eritrea, and across the continents of Africa and Asia, the Caribbean, Vietnam, Thailand, India, and many other parts of the world.

(f) Illinois is responsible for numerous social and economic improvements that shaped the infrastructure and social fabric of our nation, including, but not limited to, the creation of the Illinois and Michigan Canal opening

navigation and trade between the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes; Jane Addams' innovative social work at the Hull House; Ida B. Wells' courageous journalism and commitment to abolition; inventions like the John Deere steel plow and modern barbed wire by Joseph Glidden that reshaped agriculture; the opening of Route 66, the Mother Road, originating in Chicago; the first McDonald's, a restaurant that would change how Americans eat; and the first cellular telephone, which changed communication forever.

(g) In 2008, the nation elected its first African American president, President Barack Obama, who built his career as a community organizer, law professor, and elected official in Illinois.

(h) The 250th anniversary of our nation's founding presents an opportunity for Illinoisans and Americans to consider this legacy and reflect on a diversity of perspectives and experiences that are often left untold.

(i) The nation's Semiquincentennial offers a commemoration that focuses on all people who call Illinois home, in every part of the State and of all ages and backgrounds, and centers our shared humanity in this process, as well as our common purpose. It offers every person in Illinois the opportunity to see themselves within this complex history and create a more just future.

Section 10. Creation of Illinois America 250 Commission;

definition; purpose. The Illinois America 250 Commission is created. As used in this Act, "Commission" means the Illinois America 250 Commission. The principal purpose of the Commission shall be to plan, promote, and implement appropriate commemoration of the 250th Anniversary of the founding of the United States of America ("Semiquincentennial").

Section 15. Duties.

(a) The Commission shall develop, encourage, and execute an inclusive commemoration and observance of the founding of the United States of America, and Illinois' imperative role in the nation's history.

(b) The Commission shall promote the inclusive and respectful identification, interpretation, documentation, preservation, and recognition of cultural and historical narratives and resources, including traditional cultural knowledge, oral histories, archival materials, objects, buildings, structures, sites, and landscapes related to Illinois history and prehistory.

(c) The Commission shall consider organizing its activities under the 5 historic themes established by the American Association for State and Local History in "The Field Guide for the Semiquincentennial: Making History at 250".

(d) The Commission shall serve as the official representative of the State of Illinois for the

Semiquincentennial and all related activities, communications, and events.

(e) The Governor's office shall encourage various State agencies and organizations to work cooperatively to promote the Semiquincentennial.

Section 20. Authority; administrative support.

(a) The Commission is authorized to cooperate with the United States Semiquincentennial Commission created by Public Law 114-196, other states, tribal nations, and national, State, and local organizations engaged in activities around the United States Semiquincentennial, and other tribal, national, regional, State, and local public and private organizations having compatible purposes.

(b) The Illinois State Museum shall provide administrative support to the Commission and may make expenditures according to State law.

Section 25. Membership; meetings.

(a) The Commission shall consist of the following members:

(1) One member appointed by the Lieutenant Governor.

(2) One member appointed by the President of the Senate and one member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(3) One member appointed by the Senate Minority Leader and one member appointed by the House Minority Leader.

(4) The Director of the Illinois State Museum.

(5) The Harold Washington Library Archivist.

(6) A Black historian reflecting the experiences and contributions of American Descendants of Slavery (ADOS), appointed by the Governor.

(7) A historian reflecting the experiences and contributions of Asian and Latina/o/x communities, appointed by the Governor.

(8) The following members appointed by the Governor:

(A) Three representatives of tribal Nations and communities including the Ojibwe, Odawa, Potawatomi, Shawnee, Osage, Peoria, Miami, Sac and Fox, Mesquaki, Kickapoo, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, and additional tribal members living in Illinois today.

(B) A representative of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

(C) A representative from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

(D) A representative of Illinois humanities.

(E) A representative of the Illinois Municipal League.

(F) Three members of the public with related or relevant backgrounds, expertise, or interests. Knowledge in the following shall be prioritized in making an appointment under this item: the culture, traditions, and history of American Indians/Native

Americans; Black Americans; Latinos/Latinas/Hispanic Americans; Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; the LGBTQAI+ community; immigrants and refugees; veterans' organizations; women's history; the history of Illinois' agriculture, architecture, armed forces, arts, civics, cultural geography, ecology, education, faith-based communities, folklore, government, industry, labor, law, medicine, and transportation; anthropology; archeology; cultural exhibits and museums; heritage tourism; historic preservation; and social justice.

(b) The Governor's office, with the assistance of the Chair of the Commission and the Illinois State Museum, shall be responsible for ensuring that 60% of the appointed members of the Commission consist of people who represent historically excluded and marginalized communities.

(c) The appointing authorities shall coordinate their appointments to represent and celebrate the diverse makeup and complex cultural geography of this State.

(d) The Commission may adopt bylaws for the establishment of a quorum and the conducting of business.

(e) Members shall serve for the duration of the Commission, provided any public official's expiration of a term of office shall create a vacancy. Any vacancy occurring in the membership of the Commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

(f) The Commission shall hold meetings at least twice a year:

(1) at times and places to be determined by the Chair;
and

(2) that are conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

(g) Members shall serve without compensation and shall not be reimbursed for expenses incurred in performing their duties.

(h) The Governor shall appoint a member of the Commission to serve as Chair of the Commission.

Section 30. Advisory committees and working groups. The Chair of the Commission, with the concurrence of the Commission, shall create one or more advisory committees and working groups to advise the Commission. Any advisory committee or working group shall conduct meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

Section 35. Illinois America 250 Commission Trust Fund; in-kind gifts.

(a) The Commission may accept monetary gifts and grants from any public or private source, which shall be held in the Illinois America 250 Commission Trust Fund. The Illinois America 250 Commission Trust Fund is created as a non-appropriated trust fund to be held outside of the State

treasury, with the State Treasurer as custodian. All gifts, grants, assets, funds, or money received by the Commission under this Act shall be deposited and held in the Trust Fund by the State Treasurer as ex officio custodian separate and apart from all public money or funds of this State and shall be administered by the Commission exclusively for the purposes set forth in this Act. All money in the Trust Fund shall be invested and reinvested by the State Treasurer. All interest accruing from these investments shall be deposited into the Trust Fund.

(b) The Commission may also accept in-kind gifts.

Section 40. Reporting. The Commission shall make an annual written report and make any recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly at least 30 days prior to the convening of each regular session of the General Assembly, commencing with the start of the regular session in 2023 and continuing through its final report.

Section 45. Dissolution; repeal.

(a) The Commission and its advisory committees and working groups are dissolved on June 1, 2027, and any assets remaining in the Illinois America 250 Commission Trust Fund shall be deposited into the General Revenue Fund.

(b) This Act is repealed on January 1, 2028.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon

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becoming law.