

AN ACT establishing the Amistad Commission.

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

Section 5. The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency Act is amended by adding Section 22 as follows:

(20 ILCS 3405/22 new)

Sec. 22. Amistad Commission.

(a) Purpose. The General Assembly finds and declares that 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 the principles of human rights and dignity in a civilized society.

It is the policy of the State of Illinois 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 Illinois.

It is therefore desirable to create a Commission that, as an organized body and on a continuous basis, will survey, design, encourage, and promote the implementation of education and awareness programs in Illinois that are 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; to develop workshops, institutes, seminars, and other teacher training activities designed to educate teachers on this subject matter; and that will be responsible for 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 and their struggle for freedom, liberty, and equality.

(b) Amistad Commission. The Amistad Commission is created within the Agency. The Commission is named to honor the group of enslaved Africans transported in 1839 on a vessel named the Amistad who overthrew their captors and created an international incident that was eventually argued before the Supreme Court and that shed a growing light on the evils of the slave trade and galvanized a growing abolitionist movement towards demanding the end of slavery in the United States.

(c) Membership. The Commission shall consist of 15 members, including 3 ex officio members: the State Superintendent of Education or his or her designee, the Director of Commerce and Economic Opportunity or his or her designee, and the Director of Historic Sites and Preservation or his or her designee; and 12 public members. Public members shall be appointed as follows:

(i) 2 members appointed by the President of the Senate and one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate;

(ii) 2 members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives; and

(iii) 6 members, no more than 4 of whom shall be of the same political party, appointed by the Governor.

The public members shall be residents of this State, chosen with due regard to broad geographic representation and ethnic diversity, who have served actively in organizations that educate the public on the history of the African slave trade, the contributions of African-Americans to our society, and civil rights issues.

Each public member of the Commission shall serve for a term of 3 years, except that of the initial members so appointed: one member appointed by the President of the Senate, one member

appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and 2 members appointed by the Governor shall serve for terms of one year; the member appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate, one member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and 2 members appointed by the Governor shall serve for terms of 2 years; and one member appointed by the President of the Senate, the member appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, and 2 members appointed by the Governor shall serve for terms of 3 years. Public members shall be eligible for reappointment. They shall serve until their successors are appointed and qualified, and the term of the successor of any incumbent shall be calculated from the expiration of the term of that incumbent. A vacancy occurring other than by expiration of term shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment, but for the unexpired term only.

(d) Election of chairperson; meetings. At its first meeting and annually thereafter, the Commission shall elect from among its members a chairperson and other officers it considers necessary or appropriate. After its first meeting, the Commission shall meet at least quarterly, or more frequently at the call of the chairperson or if requested by 9 or more members.

(e) Quorum. A majority of the members of the Commission constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a meeting of the Commission. A majority of the members present and serving is required for official action of the Commission.

(f) Public meeting. All business that the Commission is authorized to perform shall be conducted at a public meeting of the Commission, held in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

(g) Freedom of Information. A writing prepared, owned, used, in the possession of, or retained by the Commission in the performance of an official function is subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

(h) Compensation. The members of the Commission shall serve without compensation, but shall be entitled to reimbursement

for all necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties as members of the Commission from funds appropriated for that purpose. Reimbursement for travel, meals, and lodging shall be in accordance with the rules of the Governor's Travel Control Board.

(i) Duties. The Commission shall have the following responsibilities and duties:

(1) To provide, based upon the collective interest of the members and the knowledge and experience of the members, assistance and advice to schools within the State with respect to the implementation of education, awareness programs, textbooks, and educational materials concerned with the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in this country, and the contributions of African-Americans to our society.

(2) To survey and catalog the extent and breadth of education concerning the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in this country, and the contributions of African-Americans to our society presently being incorporated into the curricula and textbooks and taught in the school systems of the State; to inventory those African slave trade, American slavery, or relevant African-American history memorials, exhibits, and resources that should be incorporated into courses of study at educational institutions, schools, and various other locations throughout the State; and to assist the State Board of Education and other State and educational agencies in the development and implementation of African slave trade, American slavery, and African-American history education programs.

(3) To act as a liaison with textbook publishers, schools, public, private, and nonprofit resource organizations, and members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives and the Illinois Senate and House of Representatives in order to facilitate the inclusion of the history of African slavery and of African-Americans in

this country in the curricula of public and nonpublic schools.

(4) To compile a roster of individual volunteers who are willing to share their knowledge and experience in classrooms, seminars, and workshops with students and teachers on the subject of the African slave trade, American slavery, the impact of slavery on our society today, and the contributions of African-Americans to our country.

(5) To coordinate events memorializing the African slave trade, American slavery, and the history of African-Americans in this country that reflect the contributions of African-Americans in overcoming the burdens of slavery and its vestiges, and to seek volunteers who are willing and able to participate in commemorative events that will enhance student awareness of the significance of the African slave trade, American slavery, its historical impact, and the struggle for freedom.

(6) To prepare reports for the Governor and the General Assembly regarding its findings and recommendations on facilitating the inclusion of the African slave trade, American slavery studies, African-American history, and special programs in the educational system of the State.

(7) To develop, in consultation with the State Board of Education, curriculum guidelines that will be made available to every school board for the teaching of information on the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in this country, and the contributions of African-Americans to our country.

(8) To solicit, receive, and accept appropriations, gifts, and donations for Commission operations and programs authorized under this Section.

(j) Commission requests for assistance. The Commission is authorized to call upon any department, office, division, or agency of the State, or of any county, municipality, or school district of the State, to supply such data, program reports,

and other information, appropriate school personnel, and assistance as it deems necessary to discharge its responsibilities under this Act. These departments, offices, divisions, and agencies shall, to the extent possible and not inconsistent with any other law of this State, cooperate with the Commission and shall furnish it with such information, appropriate school personnel, and assistance as may be necessary or helpful to accomplish the purposes of this Act.

(k) State Board of Education assistance. The State Board of Education shall:

(1) Assist the Amistad Commission in marketing and distributing to educators, administrators, and school districts in the State educational information and other materials on the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in this country, and the contributions of African-Americans to our society.

(2) Conduct at least one teacher workshop annually on the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in this country, and the contributions of African-Americans to our society.

(3) Assist the Amistad Commission in monitoring the inclusion of slavery materials and curricula in the State's educational system.

(4) Consult with the Amistad Commission to determine ways it may survey, catalog, and extend slave trade and American slavery education presently being taught in the State's educational system.

The State Board of Education may, subject to the availability of appropriations, hire additional staff and consultants to carry out the duties and responsibilities provided within this subsection (k).

(1) Report. The Commission shall report its activities and findings, as required under subsection (i), to the Governor and General Assembly on or before June 30, 2006, and biannually thereafter.

Section 10. The School Code is amended by changing Section 27-20.4 as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/27-20.4) (from Ch. 122, par. 27-20.4)

Sec. 27-20.4. Black History Study. Every public elementary school and high school shall include in its curriculum a unit of instruction studying the events of Black History, including the history of the African slave trade, slavery in America, and the vestiges of slavery in this country. These events shall include not only the contributions made by individual African-Americans in government and in the arts, humanities and sciences to the economic, cultural and political development of the United States and Africa, but also the socio-economic struggle which African-Americans experienced collectively in striving to achieve fair and equal treatment under the laws of this nation. The studying of this material shall constitute an affirmation by students of their commitment to respect the dignity of all races and peoples and to forever eschew every form of discrimination in their lives and careers.

The State Superintendent of Education may prepare and make available to all school boards instructional materials, including those established by the Amistad Commission, which may be used as guidelines for development of a unit of instruction under this Section; provided, however, that each school board shall itself determine the minimum amount of instruction time which shall qualify as a unit of instruction satisfying the requirements of this Section.

(Source: P.A. 86-1256.)

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.