



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

HB5486

Introduced 2/13/2026, by Rep. Carol Ammons

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act

Creates the Office of Genealogical Affairs Study Committee Act. Provides that the Office of Genealogical Affairs Study Committee shall have the following duties: (1) to examine the feasibility, scope, and structure of a permanent Office of Genealogical Affairs within the State government; (2) to examine how an Office of Genealogical Affairs could operationalize reparative genealogical services; (3) to examine how an Office of Genealogical Affairs could support forensic and historical accountability efforts; and (4) to examine how an Office of Genealogical Affairs could support administrative genealogical determinations. Provides that the Office of Genealogical Affairs Study Committee shall report to the Governor and the General Assembly no later than 18 months after the effective date of the Act. Effective immediately.

LRB104 17770 TRT 31202 b

1 AN ACT concerning State government.

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

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Office
5 of Genealogical Affairs Study Committee Act.

6 Section 5. Legislative findings and purpose.

7 (a) The General Assembly finds that:

8 (1) Illinois has a documented history of slavery,
9 coerced labor, family separation, racial violence, and
10 State-sanctioned discrimination, including, but not
11 limited to, the enslavement of African Americans at
12 State-operated salt mines, the enforcement of Black Codes,
13 and the long-term exclusion of African American families
14 from full civic participation.

15 (2) These historical practices resulted in the
16 systematic destruction, fragmentation, or non-creation of
17 genealogical records for African American families and
18 other historically displaced populations, impairing their
19 ability to document family identity, lineage, and
20 inheritance.

21 (3) Illinois recognizes genealogical access as a
22 public service and democratic good through its archival,
23 records preservation, and genealogical programs, and it

1 recognizes family identity as a legally protected interest
2 for the purposes of adoption, parentage, and child welfare
3 law.

4 (4) Genealogical knowledge serves not only
5 administrative purposes but also reparative, forensic,
6 public health, and psychosocial functions, including
7 identity formation, family reunification, historical
8 accountability, and access to health-related genetic
9 information.

10 (5) The State lacks an integrated framework for
11 delivering genealogical services across restorative,
12 forensic, and administrative domains, particularly where
13 traditional documentation is absent.

14 (b) Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to commission a
15 comprehensive study on the establishment of an Office of
16 Genealogical Affairs, grounded in Illinois law and public
17 service traditions, to determine how the State may equitably
18 provide genealogical services that support identity repair,
19 historical accountability, and, where applicable,
20 administrative determinations.

21 Section 10. Office of Genealogical Affairs Study
22 Committee.

23 (a) The Office of Genealogical Affairs Study Committee is
24 created. The members of the Commission shall be as follows:

25 (1) 11 public members appointed by the Governor with

1 specialties in the following areas or with following
2 expertise:

3 (A) anthropology and population genetics
4 genealogy;

5 (B) biological anthropology;

6 (C) cultural anthropology;

7 (D) an archivist;

8 (E) a historian;

9 (F) a certified genealogist; and

10 (G) a psycho-social or psycho-mental health
11 professional;

12 (2) 2 members that are descendant community leadership
13 representatives appointed by the Governor;

14 (3) one member appointed by the President of the
15 Senate;

16 (4) one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the
17 Senate;

18 (5) one member appointed by the Speaker of the House
19 of Representatives;

20 (6) one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the
21 House of Representatives; and

22 (7) 4 ex-officio members:

23 (A) the Secretary of State, or the Secretary's
24 designee;

25 (B) the Director of Public Health, or the
26 Director's designee;

1 (C) the Secretary of Human Services, or the
2 Secretary's designee; and

3 (D) the Director of the Illinois State Archives,
4 or the Director's designee.

5 (b) Each Committee member shall serve for a term of 2
6 years, or until his or successor is appointed, except in the
7 case of initial appoints who shall serve 2 years from the
8 effective date of this Act.

9 (c) The Committee shall meet monthly beginning in August,
10 2026.

11 Section 15. Duties of the Commission.

12 (a) The Committee shall have the following duties:

13 (1) to examine the feasibility, scope, and structure
14 of a permanent Office of Genealogical Affairs within State
15 government;

16 (2) to examine how an Office of Genealogical Affairs
17 could operationalize reparative genealogical services;

18 (3) to examine how an Office of Genealogical Affairs
19 could support forensic and historical accountability
20 efforts; and

21 (4) to examine how an Office of Genealogical Affairs
22 could support administrative genealogical determinations.

23 (b) The Committee may employ skilled experts with the
24 approval of the chairperson, and shall receive the cooperation
25 of those State agencies it deems appropriate to assist the

1 Committee in carrying out its duties.

2 (c) The Department of Human Services, in consultation with
3 the Department of Public Health, the Illinois State Archives,
4 and the African Descent-Citizens Reparations Commission, shall
5 provide administrative and other support to the Committee.

6 Section 20. Report to the Governor and General Assembly.
7 No later than 18 months after the effective date of this Act,
8 the Study Committee shall prepare a report to the Governor and
9 the General Assembly, which shall include, but is not limited
10 to:

11 (1) a recommended statutory placement, governance
12 structure, and staffing model for an Office of
13 Genealogical Affairs;

14 (2) a phased implementation plan prioritizing
15 reparative forensic services;

16 (3) ethical, legal, and data-governance frameworks for
17 genealogical and genetic genealogy services;

18 (4) the estimated costs, funding mechanisms, and
19 interagency coordination needs; and

20 (5) the options for pilot programs and statewide
21 scaling.

22 Section 25. Construction. Nothing in this Act shall be
23 construed to mandate genetic testing, limit access to existing
24 genealogical services, or authorize the use of genealogical

1 data for surveillance or for law enforcement purposes.

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