



102ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2021 and 2022

HB5015

Introduced 1/27/2022, by Rep. Edgar Gonzalez, Jr.

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act

Creates the Illinois America 250 Commission Act for the purpose of planning, promoting, and implementing appropriate commemoration of the 250th Anniversary of the founding of the United States of America. Requires the Illinois America 250 Commission to 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. Provides that the Illinois America 250 Commission shall consist of specified voting members. Authorizes the Illinois America 250 Commission to cooperate with the United States Semiquincentennial Commission and various State agencies, other states, tribal nations, and national, State, and local organizations. Provides that the Commission shall be housed within the Illinois State Museum. Authorizes fundraising. Provides reporting requirements. Provides that the Commission and its advisory committees shall be dissolved on June 1, 2027, and repeals the Act on January 1, 2028. Effective immediately.

LRB102 23763 NLB 32954 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
5 Illinois America 250 Commission Act.

6 Section 5. Findings. The General Assembly finds that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

25 Section 10. Creation of Illinois America 250 Commission;

1 definition; purpose. The Illinois America 250 Commission Act
2 is created. For purposes of this Section, "Commission" means
3 the Illinois America 250 Commission. The principal purpose of
4 the Commission shall be to plan, promote, and implement
5 appropriate commemoration of the 250th Anniversary of the
6 founding of the United States of America
7 ("Semiquincentennial").

8 Section 15. Duties.

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

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

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

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

1 Semiquincentennial and all related activities, communications,
2 and events.

3 (e) The Commission shall encourage various State agencies
4 and organizations to work cooperatively to promote the
5 Semiquincentennial.

6 Section 20. Authority; administrative support.

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

14 (b) The Illinois State Museum shall provide administrative
15 support to the Commission and may make expenditures according
16 to the Commission's policies and procedures and State law.

17 Section 25. Membership; meetings.

18 (a) Membership of the Commission shall consist of the
19 following membership:

20 (1) Two members appointed by the Governor of Illinois.

21 (2) One member appointed by the Lieutenant Governor.

22 (3) One member appointed by the President of the
23 Senate and one member appointed by the Speaker of the
24 House of Representatives.

1 (4) One member appointed by the Senate Minority Leader
2 and one member appointed by the House Minority Leader.

3 (5) The Illinois representatives serving on the United
4 States Semiquincentennial Commission as certified by the
5 executive officer of the United States Semiquincentennial
6 Commission.

7 (6) The Museum Director of the Illinois State Museum,
8 who shall serve as the Commission Chair.

9 (7) The Harold Washington Library Archivist.

10 (8) A Black historian reflecting the experiences and
11 contributions of American Descendants of Slavery (ADOS).

12 (9) A historian reflecting the experiences and
13 contributions of Asian and Latina/o/x communities.

14 (10) The following members appointed by the Illinois
15 America 250 Commission Chair:

16 (A) Up to 12 representatives of tribal Nations and
17 communities including the Ojibwe, Odawa, Potawatomi,
18 Shawnee, Osage, the Peoria Tribe of Indians of
19 Oklahoma, inclusive of the Peoria, Kaskaskia,
20 Piankashaw, and Wea peoples, the Miami Tribe of
21 Oklahoma, Sauk, Mesquaki, Kickapoo, Ho-Chunk,
22 Menominee, the Chickasaw Nations, and additional
23 tribal members living in Illinois today.

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

26 (C) Up to 5 representatives from other State of

1 Illinois departments, agencies, or offices to which
2 the Semiquincentennial is relevant to its mission and
3 operations.

4 (D) A representative of Illinois Humanities.

5 (E) A representative of a veterans' organization
6 such as, but not limited to, the American Legion, the
7 Disabled American Veterans, and Veterans of Foreign
8 Wars of the United States.

9 (F) A representative of the Daughters of the
10 American Revolution and the Sons of the American
11 Revolution.

12 (G) Up to 10 members of the general public with
13 related or relevant background, expertise, or
14 interest, appointed by the Governor. Knowledge in the
15 following shall be prioritized in making an
16 appointment under this item: the culture, traditions,
17 and history of American Indians/Native Americans;
18 Black Americans; Latinos/Latinas/Hispanic Americans;
19 Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; the LGBTQAI+
20 community; immigrants and refugees; women's history;
21 the history of Illinois' agriculture, architecture,
22 armed forces, arts, civics, cultural geography,
23 ecology, education, faith-based communities, folklore,
24 government, industry, labor, law, medicine, and
25 transportation; anthropology; archeology; cultural
26 exhibits and museums; heritage tourism; historic

1 preservation; and social justice.

2 (b) Of the appointed membership, 60% must be people that
3 represent historically excluded and marginalized communities.

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

7 (d) The Commission shall adopt its rules for the
8 establishment of a quorum and the conducting of business.

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

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

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

17 and

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

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

23 Section 30. Advisory committees and working groups. The
24 Chair of the Commission, with concurrence of the Commission,
25 shall create one or more advisory committees and working

1 groups to advise the Commission.

2 Section 35. Fundraising. The Commission may solicit,
3 accept, use, and dispose of donations, funds, and gifts, in
4 conformance with public ethics laws, to support the purposes
5 and goals of the Commission. No elected public official
6 serving on the Commission shall be involved in soliciting any
7 private funds or gifts for the Commission.

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

14 Section 45. Dissolution; repeal.

15 (a) The Commission and its advisory committees are
16 dissolved on June 1, 2027.

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

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