

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 Baptiste 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 is
2 created. As used in this Act, "Commission" means the Illinois
3 America 250 Commission. The principal purpose of the
4 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 Governor's office shall encourage various State
4 agencies and organizations to work cooperatively to promote
5 the 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 State law.

17 Section 25. Membership; meetings.

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

19 (1) One member appointed by the Lieutenant Governor.

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

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

1 (4) The Director of the Illinois State Museum.

2 (5) The Harold Washington Library Archivist.

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

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

9 (8) The following members appointed by the Governor:

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

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

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

19 (D) A representative of Illinois humanities.

20 (E) A representative of the Illinois Municipal
21 League.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

18 Section 45. Dissolution; repeal.

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

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

24 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon

1 becoming law.