



94TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2005 and 2006

HB0383

Introduced 1/25/2005, by Rep. Monique D. Davis

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

20 ILCS 3405/22 new

Amends the Historic Preservation Agency Act. Creates the Amistad Commission. Contains provisions concerning the membership and duties of the Commission. These duties include: (i) providing 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; (ii) surveying and cataloging the extent and breadth of education concerning these topics; (iii) acting as a liaison to textbook publishers and others in forming a curriculum on these subjects; (iv) coordinating events and programs on slavery and related issues; and (v) developing with the cooperation of the State Board of Education, curriculum guidelines for the teaching of information on slavery topics and issues. Authorizes the Commission 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, personnel, and assistance as it deems necessary to discharge its responsibilities under this Act. Provides that the State Board of Education shall assist the Commission in a variety of ways, including by: (i) marketing and distributing information and materials on slavery topics to schools, and (ii) conducting at least one teacher workshop annually on slavery issues. Requires the Commission to make biannual reports on its activities to the Governor and the General Assembly. Effective immediately.

LRB094 06620 RSP 36713 b

FISCAL NOTE ACT
MAY APPLY

1 AN ACT establishing the Amistad Commission.

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

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

6 (20 ILCS 3405/22 new)

7 Sec. 22. Amistad Commission.

8 (a) Purpose. The General Assembly finds and declares that
9 all people should know of and remember the human carnage and
10 dehumanizing atrocities committed during the period of the
11 African slave trade and slavery in America and of the vestiges
12 of slavery in this country; and it is in fact vital to educate
13 our citizens on these events, the legacy of slavery, the sad
14 history of racism in this country, and the principles of human
15 rights and dignity in a civilized society.

16 It is the policy of the State of Illinois that the history
17 of the African slave trade, slavery in America, the depth of
18 their impact in our society, and the triumphs of
19 African-Americans and their significant contributions to the
20 development of this country is the proper concern of all
21 people, particularly students enrolled in the schools of the
22 State of Illinois.

23 It is therefore desirable to create a Commission that, as
24 an organized body and on a continuous basis, will survey,
25 design, encourage, and promote the implementation of education
26 and awareness programs in Illinois that are concerned with the
27 African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of
28 slavery in this country, and the contributions of
29 African-Americans in building our country; to develop
30 workshops, institutes, seminars, and other teacher training
31 activities designed to educate teachers on this subject matter;
32 and that will be responsible for the coordination of events on

1 a regular basis, throughout the State, that provide appropriate
2 memorialization of the events concerning the enslavement of
3 Africans and their descendants in America and their struggle
4 for freedom, liberty, and equality.

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

13 (c) Membership. The Commission shall consist of 15 members,
14 including 3 ex officio members: the State Superintendent of
15 Education or his or her designee, the Director of Commerce and
16 Economic Opportunity or his or her designee, and the Director
17 of Historic Sites and Preservation or his or her designee; and
18 12 public members. Public members shall be appointed as
19 follows:

20 (i) 3 members, no more than 2 of whom shall be of the
21 same political party, appointed by the President of the
22 Senate;

23 (ii) 3 members, no more than 2 of whom shall be of the
24 same political party, appointed by the Speaker of the House
25 of Representatives; and

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

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

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

1 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and 2
2 members appointed by the Governor shall serve for terms of one
3 year; one member appointed by the President of the Senate, one
4 member appointed by the Speaker of the House of
5 Representatives, and 2 members appointed by the Governor shall
6 serve for terms of 2 years; and one member appointed by the
7 President of the Senate, one member appointed by the Speaker of
8 the House of Representatives, and 2 members appointed by the
9 Governor shall serve for terms of 3 years. Public members shall
10 be eligible for reappointment. They shall serve until their
11 successors are appointed and qualified, and the term of the
12 successor of any incumbent shall be calculated from the
13 expiration of the term of that incumbent. A vacancy occurring
14 other than by expiration of term shall be filled in the same
15 manner as the original appointment, but for the unexpired term
16 only.

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

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

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

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

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

1 for all necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their
2 official duties as members of the Commission from funds
3 appropriated for that purpose.

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

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

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

29 (3) To act as a liaison with textbook publishers,
30 schools, public, private, and nonprofit resource
31 organizations, and members of the United States Senate and
32 House of Representatives and the Illinois Senate and House
33 of Representatives in order to facilitate the inclusion of
34 the history of African slavery and of African-Americans in
35 this country in the curricula of public and nonpublic
36 schools.

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

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

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

22 (7) To develop, in consultation with the State Board of
23 Education, curriculum guidelines for the teaching of
24 information on the African slave trade, slavery in America,
25 the vestiges of slavery in this country, and the
26 contributions of African-Americans to our country. Every
27 school board shall incorporate the information in an
28 appropriate place in the curriculum of elementary and
29 secondary school students.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 becoming law.