

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) 2 members appointed by the President of the Senate  
21 and one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the  
22 Senate;

23 (ii) 2 members appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
24 Representatives and one member appointed by the Minority  
25 Leader of the House 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; the member appointed by the Minority Leader of the  
4 Senate, one 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, the member appointed by the Minority  
8 Leader of the House of Representatives, and 2 members appointed  
9 by the Governor shall serve for terms of 3 years. Public  
10 members shall be eligible for reappointment. They shall serve  
11 until their successors are appointed and qualified, and the  
12 term of the successor of any incumbent shall be calculated from  
13 the expiration of the term of that incumbent. A vacancy  
14 occurring other than by expiration of term shall be filled in  
15 the same manner as the original appointment, but for the  
16 unexpired term 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. Reimbursement for travel,  
4 meals, and lodging shall be in accordance with the rules of the  
5 Governor's Travel Control Board.

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

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

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

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

1 this country in the curricula of public and nonpublic  
2 schools.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 Section 10. The School Code is amended by changing Section  
2 27-20.4 as follows:

3 (105 ILCS 5/27-20.4) (from Ch. 122, par. 27-20.4)

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

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

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

27  
28 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon  
29 becoming law.