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To: Economic Development and Tourism; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2082

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A MISSISSIPPI BLUES COMMISSION TO DEVELOP
2 A PLAN TO PROMOTE AUTHENTIC MISSISSIPPI "BLUES" MUSIC AND "BLUES
3 CULTURE" FOR PURPOSES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT; TO PRESCRIBE THE
4 FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION; TO EMPOWER THE COMMISSION
5 TO ACCEPT AND EXPEND GRANT FUNDS; TO PROVIDE FOR INTERDEPARTMENTAL
6 COOPERATION; TO AUTHORIZE THE COMMISSION TO PURCHASE AND ERECT
7 "MISSISSIPPI BLUES TRAIL" HISTORICAL MARKERS WITH THE ASSISTANCE
8 OF THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION; AND FOR RELATED
9 PURPOSES.

10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

11 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is hereby created the Mississippi
12 Blues Commission, hereinafter referred to as the "commission," to
13 be in existence for the period from July 1, 2004, to July 1, 2008.
14 The commission may accept and expend grants and private donations
15 from any source, including federal, state, public and private
16 entities, to assist it to carry out its functions.

17 (2) For purposes of this act, the term "blues" shall mean
18 African-American roots music and the culture that created it.

19 (3) The powers, functions and duties of the commission shall
20 include, but not be limited to, the following:

21 (a) To study, deliberate and report to the Governor and
22 the Legislature on or before January 1, 2005, on the best method
23 to market and foster an appreciation of the blues, to include
24 tourism, academic study and blues archives, blues historical
25 preservation, blues cultural education and the support of
26 performing artists. Such marketing plan shall be designed to
27 attract tourists, conferences, music performances, filmmakers and
28 others for the purpose of economic development of all geographic
29 areas of the state through the promotion of the blues and the

30 heritage and culture that produced the blues, and to analyze the
31 tourism potential of the blues for Mississippi.

32 (b) To make an inventory of blues "assets" that make up
33 the blues and blues culture that could be developed into a program
34 for domestic and international tourism, and opportunities for
35 investment.

36 (c) To establish a statewide Mississippi "Blues Trail"
37 infrastructure to offer to tourists and targeted groups a
38 structured tour of Mississippi blues historical sites and
39 performance venues.

40 (d) Coordination with the Division of Tourism of the
41 Mississippi Development Authority, the Department of Archives and
42 History, the Mississippi Department of Transportation, the
43 Mississippi Educational Television Authority, the State
44 Institutions of Higher Learning, the Center for the Study of
45 Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi, the University
46 Center for Economic Development at Mississippi Valley State
47 University, the Delta Center for Culture and Learning at Delta
48 State University, the Delta Blues Museum, the Delta Music
49 Institute, the Mississippi Arts Commission and similar
50 organizations to share resources and information in order to
51 ensure a comprehensive approach to marketing the blues and blues
52 culture in Mississippi.

53 (e) To make recommendations regarding the establishment
54 of, and budgeting for a permanent Mississippi Office of the Blues
55 as an agency of state government with an executive director and
56 appropriate staff to carry out the marketing plan developed by the
57 commission. To the extent practical, any office shall be located
58 at an existing public or private location which is appropriate to
59 the blues or blues culture in Mississippi, with minimal cost to
60 the state.

61 (f) Coordination of the blues marketing plan with any
62 existing state historic preservation programs, in order to:

63 (i) Identify and preserve blues historic
64 properties;
65 (ii) Determine the eligibility of such properties
66 for listing on the National Register;
67 (iii) Prepare nominations of such sites for
68 inclusion on the National Register;
69 (iv) Maintenance of blues historical and
70 archaeological data bases; and
71 (v) Evaluation of such sites for eligibility for
72 state and federal preservation incentives.

73 (4) The commission shall be composed of the following
74 members:

75 (a) The Director of the Division of Tourism of the
76 Mississippi Development Authority;

77 (b) The Executive Director of the Mississippi
78 Department of Archives and History, or his designee;

79 (c) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Arts
80 Commission, or his designee;

81 (d) The Executive Director of the Mississippi
82 Educational Television Authority, or his designee;

83 (e) The Director of the Center for the Study of
84 Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi;

85 (f) The Director of the University Center for Economic
86 Development at Mississippi Valley State University;

87 (g) The Director of the Delta Center for Culture and
88 Learning at Delta State University;

89 (h) Two (2) members of the Mississippi Senate
90 designated by the Lieutenant Governor, who shall serve on a
91 nonvoting basis;

92 (i) Two (2) members of the Mississippi House of
93 Representatives designated by the Speaker of the House, who shall
94 serve on a nonvoting basis;

95 (j) Two (2) members appointed by the Governor, who
96 shall have experience in cultural affairs or tourism development
97 in the Mississippi Delta; and

98 (k) Four (4) members appointed by the Governor from the
99 state at large, who shall have demonstrated a commitment to the
100 understanding and promotion of the blues.

101 (5) The Governor shall designate one (1) commission member
102 to serve as chairman for a term concurrent with that of the
103 Governor. The commission shall meet upon the call of the chairman
104 not later than August 1, 2004, and shall organize for business by
105 adopting internal organizational procedures necessary for
106 efficient operation of the commission, including officers, quorum
107 requirements and policies for any commission staff. Each member
108 of the commission shall designate necessary staff of their
109 departments to provide administrative support to assist the
110 commission in performing its duties and responsibilities. The
111 commission shall meet and conduct business at least quarterly.
112 Meetings of the commission shall be open to the public and
113 opportunity for public comment shall be made available.

114 (6) Members of the commission shall receive no compensation
115 for their services.

116 (7) The commission shall submit a report, including any
117 proposed legislation, to the Governor and to the Legislature
118 before the convening of the 2005 Regular Session. The report
119 shall include a comprehensive state plan for marketing the blues
120 as specifically provided above.

121 (8) All departments, boards, agencies, officers and
122 institutions of the state and all subdivisions thereof shall
123 cooperate with the commission in carrying out its purposes under
124 this act.

125 (9) Any funds or donations received by the commission shall
126 be deposited into a special fund which is hereby created in the
127 State Treasury, and disbursement therefrom shall be made upon

128 warrants by the Department of Finance and Administration after
129 receipt of requisitions submitted by the appropriate person
130 designated by the commission. Monies in the special fund may be
131 used by the commission in carrying out its responsibilities under
132 this act.

133 **SECTION 2.** The commission shall designate specific sites for
134 erection of appropriate "Mississippi Blues Trail" markers to offer
135 to tourists and targeted groups a structured tour of Mississippi
136 blues historical sites and performance venues. The commission
137 shall be authorized to purchase appropriate Mississippi Blues
138 Trail markers from any of its available funds. The texts for the
139 Mississippi Blues Trail markers shall be approved by the
140 commission. The Mississippi Department of Transportation shall
141 cooperate with the commission by erecting and maintaining the
142 markers that have been approved by the commission.

143 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
144 and after July 1, 2004.