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To: Economic Development and Tourism; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2082  
(As Passed the Senate)

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) The State Director of the USDA Rural Development  
90 Agency;

91 (i) Two (2) members of the Mississippi Senate  
92 designated by the Lieutenant Governor, who shall serve on a  
93 nonvoting basis;

94           (j) Two (2) members of the Mississippi House of  
95 Representatives designated by the Speaker of the House, who shall  
96 serve on a nonvoting basis;

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

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

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

116           (6) Members of the commission shall receive no compensation  
117 for their services.

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

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

127           (9) Any funds or donations received by the commission shall  
128 be deposited into a special fund which is hereby created in the  
129 State Treasury, and disbursement therefrom shall be made upon  
130 warrants by the Department of Finance and Administration after  
131 receipt of requisitions submitted by the appropriate person  
132 designated by the commission. Monies in the special fund may be  
133 used by the commission in carrying out its responsibilities under  
134 this act.

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

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