

By: Representatives Currie, Gibbs (72nd),
Anthony

To: Tourism

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
HOUSE BILL NO. 929

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM TRAIL COMMISSION TO
2 DEVELOP A PLAN TO PROMOTE MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM TRAIL LOCATIONS AND
3 HISTORY 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 FREEDOM 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 Freedom Trail Commission, hereinafter referred to as the
13 "commission", to be in existence for the period from July 1, 2022,
14 to July 1, 2026. The commission may accept and expend grants and
15 private donations from any source, including federal, state,
16 public and private entities, to assist it to carry out its
17 functions.

18 (2) For purposes of this act, the term "Movement" shall mean
19 the American Civil Rights Movement.

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



22 (a) To study, deliberate and report to the Governor and
23 the Legislature on or before January 1, 2023, on the best method
24 to market and promote the Freedom Trail, to include tourism,
25 academic study and historic archives, historic preservation,
26 cultural education and the support of veterans of the Movement.
27 Such marketing shall be designed to attract tourists, conferences,
28 filmmakers and others for the purpose of economic development of
29 all geographic areas of the state through the promotion of the
30 stories and sites of the Movement and the historic context for the
31 Movement, and to analyze the tourism potential of the Freedom
32 Trail for Mississippi.

33 (b) To make an inventory of "assets" that make up the
34 Movement history that could be developed into Freedom Trail sites
35 for domestic and international tourism, and opportunities for
36 investment.

37 (c) To establish a statewide Mississippi Freedom Trail
38 infrastructure to offer to tourists and targeted groups a
39 structured tour of Mississippi historic sites.

40 (d) Coordinate with Visit Mississippi and the
41 Mississippi Development Authority, the Mississippi Civil Rights
42 Museum and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the
43 Mississippi Department of Transportation, the Mississippi
44 Educational Television Authority, the State Institutions of Higher
45 Learning, the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the
46 University of Mississippi, the University Center for Economic



47 Development at Mississippi Valley State University, the Delta
48 Center for Culture and Learning at Delta State University, and
49 similar organizations in the sharing of resources and information
50 in order to ensure a comprehensive approach to marketing the
51 Freedom Trail and the history of the Civil Rights Movement in
52 Mississippi.

53 (e) Coordination of the Freedom Trail marketing plan
54 with any existing state historic preservation programs, in order
55 to:

56 (i) Identify and preserve historic properties and
57 sites of the Civil Rights Movement;

58 (ii) Determine the eligibility of such properties
59 and sites for listing on the National Register;

60 (iii) Prepare nominations of such sites for
61 inclusion on the National Register;

62 (iv) Maintenance of historical and archaeological
63 data bases; and

64 (v) Evaluation of such sites for eligibility for
65 state and federal preservation incentives.

66 (4) The commission shall be composed of the following
67 members:

68 (a) The Director of the Division of Tourism of the
69 Mississippi Development Authority or their designee;

70 (b) The Executive Director of the Mississippi
71 Department of Archives and History, or their designee;



72 (c) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Arts
73 Commission, or their designee;

74 (d) The Executive Director of the Mississippi
75 Educational Television Authority, or their designee;

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

78 (f) A person designated by the President of Mississippi
79 Valley State University;

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

82 (h) The Director of the Mississippi Civil Rights
83 Museum;

84 (i) The Executive Director of the Mississippi
85 Humanities Council;

86 (j) The Executive Director of the Veterans of the
87 Mississippi Civil Rights Movement;

88 (k) The Executive Director of the Margaret Walker
89 Alexander Center at Jackson State University;

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

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



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

99 (o) Two (2) members appointed by the Governor from the
100 state at large, who shall have demonstrated a commitment to
101 furthering the stories of the Civil Rights Movement in
102 Mississippi.

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, 2022, 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 his or her
111 respective agency, department, university or business entity, as
112 the case may be, to provide administrative support to assist the
113 commission in performing its duties and responsibilities. The
114 commission shall meet and conduct business at least quarterly each
115 year. Meetings of the commission shall be open to the public and
116 opportunity for public comment shall be made available.

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

119 (7) The commission shall submit a report, including any
120 proposed legislation, to the Governor and to the Legislature



121 before the convening of the 2023 Regular Session. The report
122 shall include a comprehensive state plan for marketing the Freedom
123 Trail as specifically provided above.

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

128 (9) Any funds or donations received by the commission shall
129 be deposited into a special fund which is created in the State
130 Treasury. The fund shall be maintained by the State Treasurer as
131 a special fund, separate and apart from the General Fund of the
132 state. Unexpended amounts remaining in the special fund at the
133 end of a fiscal year shall not lapse into the State General Fund,
134 and any interest earned or investment earnings on amounts in the
135 fund shall be deposited to the credit of the special fund. Monies
136 in the fund shall be expended by the Department of Finance and
137 Administration, upon appropriation by the Legislature, after
138 receipt of requisitions submitted by the appropriate person
139 designated by the commission. Monies in the special fund may be
140 used by the commission in carrying out its responsibilities under
141 this act.

142 **SECTION 2.** The commission shall designate specific sites for
143 erection of appropriate "Mississippi Freedom Trail" markers to
144 offer to tourists and targeted groups a structured tour of Civil
145 Rights Movement historical sites. The commission shall be



146 authorized to purchase appropriate Mississippi Freedom Trail
147 markers from any of its available funds. The texts for the
148 Mississippi Freedom Trail markers shall be approved by the
149 commission. The Mississippi Department of Transportation shall
150 cooperate with the commission by erecting and maintaining the
151 markers that have been approved by the commission.

152 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
153 and after July 1, 2022.

