

By: Representatives Currie, Gibbs (72nd),
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To: Tourism

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 (j) Two (2) members of the Mississippi Senate
85 designated by the Lieutenant Governor, who shall serve on a
86 nonvoting basis;

87 (k) Two (2) members of the Mississippi House of
88 Representatives designated by the Speaker of the House, who shall
89 serve on a nonvoting basis;

90 (l) Two (2) members appointed by the Governor, who
91 shall have experience in cultural affairs or tourism development
92 in Mississippi; and

93 (m) Four (4) members appointed by the Governor from the
94 state at large, who shall have demonstrated a commitment to
95 furthering the stories of the Civil Rights Movement in
96 Mississippi.



97 (5) The Governor shall designate one (1) commission member
98 to serve as chairman for a term concurrent with that of the
99 Governor. The commission shall meet upon the call of the chairman
100 not later than August 1, 2022, and shall organize for business by
101 adopting internal organizational procedures necessary for
102 efficient operation of the commission, including officers, quorum
103 requirements and policies for any commission staff. Each member
104 of the commission shall designate necessary staff of his or her
105 respective agency, department, university or business entity, as
106 the case may be, to provide administrative support to assist the
107 commission in performing its duties and responsibilities. The
108 commission shall meet and conduct business at least quarterly each
109 year. Meetings of the commission shall be open to the public and
110 opportunity for public comment shall be made available.

111 (6) Members of the commission shall receive no compensation
112 for their services.

113 (7) The commission shall submit a report, including any
114 proposed legislation, to the Governor and to the Legislature
115 before the convening of the 2023 Regular Session. The report
116 shall include a comprehensive state plan for marketing the Freedom
117 Trail as specifically provided above.

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



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

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



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

