

By: Representative Currie

To: Tourism

HOUSE BILL NO. 1325

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A MISSISSIPPI USA SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL  
2 COMMISSION TO DEVELOP PROGRAMS FOR OBSERVING THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY  
3 OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; TO AUTHORIZE COOPERATION WITH THE  
4 UNITED STATES SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL COMMISSION AND THE AMERICA250  
5 FOUNDATION AND OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS; TO  
6 DESIGNATE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMISSION; TO PROVIDE FOR  
7 THE MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMISSION; TO PROVIDE FOR  
8 REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES; TO PROHIBIT SOLICITATION OF FUNDS BY  
9 MEMBERS WHO ARE ELECTED OFFICIALS OR PUBLIC EMPLOYEES; TO PROVIDE  
10 FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF AN EXECUTIVE OFFICER/SECRETARY TO THE  
11 COMMISSION; TO PROVIDE FOR ADVISORY COMMITTEES; TO ENCOURAGE THE  
12 COOPERATION OF STATE AGENCIES AND POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS; TO  
13 EMPOWER THE COMMISSION TO ACCEPT AND EXPEND FUNDS FROM PRIVATE AND  
14 PUBLIC SOURCES FOR THIS CELEBRATION; TO CREATE THE MISSISSIPPI  
15 BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION FUND IN THE STATE TREASURY; TO REQUIRE AN  
16 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSION TO THE GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE;  
17 AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

18 WHEREAS, Public Law 114-196 established the United States  
19 Semiquincentennial Commission and its nonprofit partner, the  
20 America250 Foundation, to collaborate with affiliates at the  
21 local, territorial, state, tribal, regional, national, and  
22 international levels to educate, engage, and unite Americans  
23 throughout a commemorative period beginning in 2020 to officially  
24 conclude in 2027, culminating in the celebration of the 250th



25 Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 2026,  
26 and of the 250th Anniversary of the United States of America; and

27 WHEREAS, as of December 1, 2021, eighteen (18) states have  
28 established organizations to support America250 initiative by  
29 planning and implementing programs that honor the history  
30 and culture of the United States, including special events, public  
31 art displays, museum exhibitions, and educational curriculums, and  
32 the commission expects the widest participation to occur through  
33 state and local projects and events; and

34 WHEREAS, it is altogether appropriate to participate in a  
35 celebration of this magnitude and celebrate our state's heroes,  
36 groups, artists, industries, agriculture, historic sites and other  
37 contributions to the fabric and history of our nation during this  
38 commemorative period; NOW, THEREFORE,

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

40 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is hereby created a Mississippi USA  
41 Semiquincentennial Commission, hereinafter referred to as the  
42 "commission," to plan, promote, and implement appropriate public  
43 celebrations and official events, programs and commemorations.

44 (2) The commission is authorized to cooperate with the  
45 United States Semiquincentennial Commission and the America250  
46 Foundation, and other national and state organizations engaged in  
47 commemoration and celebration of the Semiquincentennial, and other  
48 national, regional, state, and local public and private  
49 organizations having compatible purposes.



50           (3) The commission shall designate and coordinate events and  
51 programs with respect to the formal Semiquincentennial celebration  
52 and commemoration and promote and encourage through those events,  
53 programs, digital and printed media, symposia, and educational  
54 outreach all of the following:

55           (a) Awareness and understanding of the principles of  
56 the Declaration of Independence, of the winning of American  
57 independence in the American Revolutionary War, and of the  
58 establishment of America's system of constitutional  
59 self-government.

60           (b) Teaching students and increasing public knowledge  
61 and appreciation of the breadth of American history and the  
62 centuries-long quest for "liberty and justice for all," to include  
63 sharing the stories and contributions of the various people who  
64 have populated the land, from indigenous peoples, explorers,  
65 British colonists, seekers of religious freedom, enslaved African  
66 Americans, and many others who are part of America's stories.

67           (c) Advancing the cause of liberty and American  
68 self-government and of the meaning of "E Pluribus Unum" ("from  
69 many, one"), through promoting civic knowledge and practice,  
70 including America's "Charters of Freedom" (the Declaration of  
71 Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights), and the  
72 constitutional features of self-government which emphasize the  
73 roles of active and engaged good citizens.



74           (d) Emphasizing the service and sacrifices of veterans  
75 of all generations who have secured and preserved American  
76 independence and freedom and encouraging Mississippians to honor  
77 them.

78           (e) Celebratory and commemorative events and activities  
79 throughout the State of Mississippi and its eighty-two (82)  
80 counties and its two hundred ninety-nine (299) incorporated  
81 municipalities celebrating our State's arts, culture, sports,  
82 entertainment, innovation, science, entrepreneurship, parks,  
83 preservation, and youth.

84           (4) The commission shall be composed of the following  
85 members:

86           (a) The Governor's First Lady, or her designee;

87           (b) The Lieutenant Governor, or his designee;

88           (c) The Speaker of the House of Representatives, or his  
89 designee;

90           (d) Three (3) members appointed by the Governor to  
91 serve terms concurrent with that of the Governor;

92           (e) Two (2) members appointed by the Lieutenant  
93 Governor to serve terms concurrent with that of the Lieutenant  
94 Governor;

95           (f) One (1) member appointed by the Speaker of the  
96 House of Representatives to serve a term concurrent with that of  
97 the Speaker;



98 (g) The Director of the Division of Tourism of the  
99 Mississippi Development Authority, or his or her designee;

100 (h) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Tourism  
101 Association, or his or her designee;

102 (i) The Executive Director of the Mississippi  
103 Department of Archives and History, or his or her designee;

104 (j) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Arts  
105 Commission, or his or her designee;

106 (5) Appointments shall be made within thirty (30) days after  
107 the effective date of this act, and, the Governor's First Lady  
108 shall serve as chairwoman for a term concurrent with that of the  
109 Governor. Within fifteen (15) days thereafter on a day to be  
110 designated by the Governor's First Lady, the commission shall meet  
111 and organize for business by adopting internal organizational  
112 procedures necessary for efficient operation of the commission,  
113 including officers, committees and subcommittees, quorum  
114 requirements and policies for any commission staff. Each member  
115 of the commission shall designate necessary staff of his or her  
116 respective agency, department or business entity, as the case may  
117 be, to provide administrative support to assist the commission in  
118 performing its duties and responsibilities. In the selection of  
119 its officers and the adoption of rules, resolutions and reports,  
120 an affirmative vote of a majority of the commission shall be  
121 required. All members shall be notified in writing of all



122 meetings, such notices to be transmitted as appropriate at least  
123 five (5) days prior to the date on which a meeting is to be held.  
124 The commission shall meet and conduct business at least quarterly  
125 each year. Meetings of the commission shall be open to the public  
126 and opportunity for public comment shall be made available.

127 (6) Members of the commission shall receive no compensation  
128 for their services. No commission member may incur per diem,  
129 travel or other expenses unless previously authorized by vote, at  
130 a meeting of the commission, which action shall be recorded in the  
131 official minutes of the meeting. Legislative members of the  
132 commission shall be paid from the contingent expense funds of  
133 their respective houses in the same manner as provided for  
134 committee meetings when the Legislature is not in session;  
135 however, no per diem or expense for attending meetings of the  
136 commission will be paid while the Legislature is in session.  
137 Nonlegislative members shall be paid from any funds made available  
138 for that purpose to the commission, their respective agency,  
139 department or business entity.

140 (7) No elected public official or public employee serving on  
141 the commission shall be involved in soliciting any private funds  
142 or gifts for the commission.

143 (8) The First Lady, with concurrence of the commission, may  
144 designate the chief executive officer of an agency or nonprofit  
145 organization created or chartered by legislative act, or another  
146 qualified individual, to serve as the executive officer and



147 secretary of the commission. The executive officer shall serve  
148 without additional compensation but may be reimbursed for expenses  
149 as provided for state employees. He or she shall exercise such  
150 powers delegated by the commission, including the right to apply  
151 for, receive, accept, deposit, and administer pursuant to  
152 commission authorization any federal, state, or local public or  
153 private funds given for express use by the commission for  
154 Semiquincentennial purposes.

155 (9) The First Lady, with concurrence of the commission,  
156 shall constitute one or more advisory committees to advise the  
157 commission. The committees may include such representatives as  
158 the respective executive officer or his or her designee of any of  
159 the following: the Mississippi Department of Education, the  
160 Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, the Mississippi  
161 Community College Board, the Mississippi Military Department, or  
162 the Mississippi Veterans Affairs Board; and representatives of  
163 presidents of Mississippi's public colleges and universities,  
164 Mississippi's historically black colleges and universities,  
165 community colleges, and various associations and organizations of  
166 city and county officials, state historical, educational,  
167 patriotic, civic, religious, military and veterans organizations,  
168 and community improvement and other organizations.

169 (10) To effectuate the purposes of this act, any department,  
170 division, board, bureau, commission or agency of the state or of  
171 any political subdivision thereof shall, at the request of



172 the chair of the commission or her designee, provide to the  
173 commission such facilities, assistance and data as will enable the  
174 committee properly to carry out its task. All departments,  
175 boards, agencies, officers and institutions of the state, and all  
176 subdivisions thereof, shall cooperate with the commission in  
177 carrying out its purposes under this chapter. The commission  
178 shall encourage various state agencies and organizations to work  
179 cooperatively to promote the Semiquincentennial.

180 (11) The commission is authorized and empowered to accept  
181 and expend grants and private donations from any source, including  
182 federal, state, public and private entities, and may create a  
183 supporting nonprofit organization, supervised and controlled by  
184 the commission through majority board control and representation,  
185 to accept and expend on behalf of the commission such grants and  
186 private donations, to encourage the broadest volunteer  
187 participation of public and private partners and organizations,  
188 and to assist it to carry out its functions. Any expenditures by  
189 the commission shall be authorized by a majority vote of the  
190 nonlegislative members of the commission.

191 (12) There is hereby created in the State Treasury the  
192 Mississippi Semiquincentennial Celebration Fund. Any  
193 appropriations, funds or donations received by the commission  
194 shall be deposited into this special fund. The fund shall be  
195 maintained by the State Treasurer as a special fund, separate and  
196 apart from the General Fund of the state. Unexpended amounts





197 remaining in this special fund at the end of a fiscal year shall  
198 not lapse into the State General Fund, and any interest earned or  
199 investment earnings on amounts in the fund shall be deposited to  
200 the credit of the special fund. Monies in the fund shall be  
201 expended by the Department of Finance and Administration, upon  
202 appropriation by the Legislature, after receipt of requisitions  
203 submitted by the appropriate person designated by the commission.  
204 Monies in the special fund may be used by the commission in  
205 carrying out its responsibilities under this chapter.

206 (13) The commission shall make an annual written report and  
207 make any recommendations to the Governor and Legislature at least  
208 thirty (30) days prior to the convening of each Regular Session of  
209 the Legislature, commencing in 2023 and continuing through its  
210 final report in 2027. The commission shall consider and recommend  
211 ways for the state to commemorate the Semiquincentennial through  
212 state and local legacy projects for the state at large and for  
213 counties and municipalities, and ways to enhance educational  
214 programs and extended learning offered by local boards of  
215 education, the Department of Education, relevant state agencies  
216 and departments, two- and four-year institutions of higher  
217 education, including historically black colleges and universities.

218 **SECTION 2.** Section 1 of this act shall stand repealed on June  
219 30, 2027.

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

