

By: Senator(s) Chassaniol, Fillingane

To: Tourism; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2873

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 AND 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 SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL CELEBRATION FUND IN THE STATE TREASURY; TO
 16 REQUIRE AN ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSION TO THE GOVERNOR AND
 17 LEGISLATURE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

19 **SECTION 1.** (1) The Legislature finds that:

20 (a) Public Law 114-196 established the United States
 21 Semiquincentennial Commission and its nonprofit partner, the
 22 America250 Foundation, to collaborate with affiliates at the
 23 local, territorial, state, tribal, regional, national and
 24 international levels to educate, engage and unite Americans
 25 throughout a commemorative period beginning in 2020 to officially



26 conclude in 2027, culminating in the celebration of the 250th
27 Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 2026,
28 and of the 250th Anniversary of the United States of America;

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

37 (c) It is altogether appropriate to participate in a
38 celebration of this magnitude and celebrate our state's heroes,
39 groups, artists, industries, agriculture, historic sites and other
40 contributions to the fabric and history of our nation during this
41 commemorative period.

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

46 (3) The commission is authorized to cooperate with the
47 United States Semiquincentennial Commission and the America250
48 Foundation and other national and state organizations engaged in
49 commemoration and celebration of the semiquincentennial, and other



50 national, regional, state and local public and private
51 organizations with compatible purposes.

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

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

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

69 (c) Advancing the cause of liberty and American
70 self-government and of the meaning of "E Pluribus Unum" ("from
71 many, one") through promoting civic knowledge and practice,
72 including America's "Charters of Freedom" (the Declaration of
73 Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights) and the



74 constitutional features of self-government emphasizing the roles
75 of active and engaged good citizens;

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

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

86 (5) The commission shall be composed of the following
87 members:

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

89 (b) The Lieutenant Governor or his designee;

90 (c) The Speaker of the House of Representatives or his
91 designee;

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

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



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

100 (g) The Director of the Division of Tourism of the
101 Mississippi Development Authority or his designee;

102 (h) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Tourism
103 Association or her designee;

104 (i) The Director of the Mississippi Department of
105 Archives and History or her designee;

106 (j) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Arts
107 Commission or his designee;

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



122 an affirmative vote of a majority of the commission shall be
123 required. All members shall be notified in writing of all
124 meetings, such notices to be transmitted as appropriate at least
125 five (5) days before the date on which a meeting is to be held.
126 The commission shall meet and conduct business at least quarterly
127 each year. Commission meetings shall be open to the public, and
128 opportunity for public comment shall be made available.

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

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

145 (9) The First Lady, with concurrence of the commission, may
146 designate the chief executive officer of an agency or nonprofit



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

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

170 (11) To effectuate the purposes of this section, any
171 department, division, board, bureau, commission or agency of the



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

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

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



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

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

219 (15) This section shall stand repealed on June 30, 2027.

220 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
221 and after July 1, 2022.

