

By: Senator(s) Harkins, Kirby, McCaughn,  
Blackwell, Younger, Whaley, Seymour, Parker,  
Robinson

To: Accountability,  
Efficiency, Transparency

SENATE BILL NO. 2218

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE MISSISSIPPI-IRELAND TRADE COMMISSION;  
2 TO STATE FINDINGS OF THE LEGISLATURE; TO PROVIDE FOR APPOINTMENTS  
3 TO THE COMMISSION AND THE LENGTH OF THEIR TERMS; TO SPECIFY HOW  
4 THE COMMISSION IS TO CONDUCT ITS BUSINESS; TO SET OUT THE PURPOSES  
5 OF THE COMMISSION; TO AUTHORIZE THE COMMISSION TO RAISE FUNDS,  
6 THROUGH DIRECT SOLICITATION OR OTHER FUNDRAISING EVENTS, ALONE OR  
7 WITH OTHER GROUPS, AND TO ACCEPT GIFTS, GRANTS, AND BEQUESTS FROM  
8 INDIVIDUALS, CORPORATIONS, FOUNDATIONS, GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES, AND  
9 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS TO CARRY OUT ITS  
10 PURPOSES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

12 **SECTION 1.** The Legislature finds that:

13 (a) Over seven percent (7%) of Mississippi's 2022  
14 population is of Irish descent, making it the third largest  
15 ancestry in the Magnolia State, with more than two hundred ten  
16 thousand (210,000) citizens claiming heritage from the Emerald  
17 Isle. Irish settlers came to Mississippi in several waves of  
18 immigration, and their legacy includes business and industry,  
19 political, religious, and civic activity. Former Mississippi  
20 Governor Gerard Brandon was the grandson of Irish immigrants; and

21 (b) Beyond historical ties, the Irish have long been  
22 important to Mississippi's economy. Based on federal data,



23 Ireland is Mississippi's twelfth largest foreign trade partner,  
24 representing industries such as agriculture, aerospace, and  
25 pharmaceuticals. With a stable political environment and growing  
26 economy, Ireland is poised to advance bilateral trade and  
27 investment through direct relationships with Mississippi  
28 businesses, elected leaders, educational institutions, and  
29 markets.

30 **SECTION 2.** (1) For purposes of this section, "commission"  
31 means the Mississippi-Ireland Trade Commission.

32 (2) (a) There is hereby established the Mississippi-Ireland  
33 Trade Commission, which shall consist of ten (10) members, to be  
34 appointed as follows:

35 (i) The Governor shall appoint three (3) members,  
36 one (1) for an initial term of one (1) year, and one (1) for an  
37 initial term of two (2) years;

38 (ii) The Lieutenant Governor shall appoint two (2)  
39 members of the Senate, one (1) for an initial term of three (3)  
40 years and one (1) for an initial term of four (4) years;

41 (iii) The Speaker of the House shall appoint two  
42 (2) members of the House of Representatives, one (1) for an  
43 initial term of three (3) years and one (1) for an initial term of  
44 four (4) years;

45 (iv) The President of the Mississippi Economic  
46 Council shall appoint one (1) member for an initial term of (1)  
47 year;



48 (v) The Executive Director of the Mississippi  
49 Development Authority, or his or her designee, shall serve as an  
50 ex officio member; and

51 (vi) The Commissioner of the Institutions of  
52 Higher Learning, or his or her designee, shall serve as an ex  
53 officio, nonvoting member.

54 (b) All appointees of the Governor, Lieutenant  
55 Governor, Speaker of the House, and President of the Mississippi  
56 Economic Council shall have either current or past involvement in  
57 organizations that promote Irish affairs, or an interest in the  
58 well-being of trade relations between Mississippi and Ireland.

59 (c) All initial appointments shall be made no later  
60 than July 1, 2024. After the expiration of the initial term, all  
61 terms shall be for a period of four (4) years. A vacancy in the  
62 membership of the commission shall be filled in the same manner as  
63 the original appointment was made. A vacancy occurring during an  
64 unexpired term shall be filled for the remainder of the term.

65 (3) Appointed members shall serve without compensation at  
66 the will and pleasure of the appointing authority. The commission  
67 shall elect a chairman and such other officers as it considers  
68 necessary from among its members. A majority of the members of  
69 the commission shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of  
70 meetings, and all actions of the commission shall be by a majority  
71 vote. The commission shall meet, subject to call by the chairman,  
72 at least quarterly.



73 (4) The purpose of the commission shall be to:  
74 (a) Advance bilateral trade and investment between  
75 Mississippi and Ireland;  
76 (b) Initiate joint action on policy issues of mutual  
77 interest to Mississippi and Ireland;  
78 (c) Promote business and academic exchanges between  
79 Mississippi and Ireland;  
80 (d) Encourage mutual economic support between  
81 Mississippi and Ireland;  
82 (e) Encourage mutual investment in the infrastructure  
83 of Mississippi and Ireland; and  
84 (f) Address such other issues as determined by the  
85 commission.

86 (5) The Mississippi-Ireland Trade Commission shall be  
87 authorized to raise funds, through direct solicitation or other  
88 fundraising events, alone or with other groups, and to accept  
89 gifts, grants, and bequests from individuals, corporations,  
90 foundations, governmental agencies, and public and private  
91 organizations and institutions to carry out its purposes.

92 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
93 and after March 17, 2024.

