

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.

