

By: Representative Zuber

To: State Affairs

HOUSE BILL NO. 262

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,



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

58 (c) All initial appointments shall be made no later
59 than July 1, 2025. After the expiration of the initial term, all
60 terms shall be for a period of four (4) years. A vacancy in the
61 membership of the commission shall be filled in the same manner as
62 the original appointment was made. A vacancy occurring during an
63 unexpired term shall be filled for the remainder of the term.

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



(4) The purpose of the commission shall be to:

(a) Advance bilateral trade and investment between Mississippi and Ireland;

(b) Initiate joint action on policy issues of mutual interest to Mississippi and Ireland;

(c) Promote business and academic exchanges between Mississippi and Ireland;

(d) Encourage mutual economic support between Mississippi and Ireland;

(e) Encourage mutual investment in the infrastructure of Mississippi and Ireland; and

(f) Address such other issues as determined by the commission.

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

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after March 17, 2025.

