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HOUSE BILL NO. 527

Offered January 11, 2012

Prefiled January 10, 2012

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Title 30 a chapter numbered 51, consisting of sections numbered 30-330 through 30-335, relating to the Virginia Slave Commission; report.*

Patron—McQuinn

Referred to Committee on Rules

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Title 30 a chapter numbered 51, consisting of sections numbered 30-330 through 30-335, as follows:

CHAPTER 51.**VIRGINIA SLAVE COMMISSION.**

§ 30-330. The Virginia Slave Commission; purpose.

The Virginia Slave Commission is established in the legislative branch of state government for the purpose of addressing contemporary political, economic, educational, and societal issues and problems whose roots lie in the transatlantic slave trade, by studying the effects of slavery and its legacy on African Americans, researching the vestiges of slavery in the Commonwealth, exploring the contributions of African Americans in building Virginia and the nation, and recommending options to resolve lingering societal problems whose origins began with the institution of slavery.

§ 30-331. Membership; terms; quorum; meetings.

The Virginia Slave Commission shall have a total membership of 11 members who shall consist of six legislative members, three nonlegislative citizen members, and two ex officio members. Members shall be appointed as follows: four members of the House of Delegates, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates; two members of the Senate, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; three nonlegislative citizen members, one of whom shall be the director of the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia or her designee, and one of whom shall be a representative of a Virginia historical organization or of a public or private institution of higher education in the Commonwealth with expertise in historical or archaeological preservation, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; and one of whom shall be a recognized historian with scholarship in American history and slavery, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. The Superintendent of Public Instruction or her designee and the Director of the Department of Historic Resources or her designee shall serve ex officio with voting privileges. Nonlegislative citizen members of the Commission shall be citizens of the Commonwealth.

Legislative members and ex officio members of the Commission shall serve terms coincident with their terms of office.

Appointments to fill vacancies, other than by expiration of a term, shall be for the unexpired terms. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments. All members may be reappointed.

No House member shall serve more than four consecutive two-year terms, no Senate member shall serve more than two consecutive four-year terms, and no nonlegislative citizen member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates or the Senate Committee on Rules shall serve more than four consecutive two-year terms. The remainder of any term to which a member is appointed to fill a vacancy shall not constitute a term in determining the member's eligibility for reappointment.

The Commission shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership who shall be members of the General Assembly. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. The Commission shall meet no more than four times each year. The meetings of the Commission shall be held at the call of the chairman or whenever the majority of the members so request.

§ 30-332. Virginia Slave Commission Fund established.

There is hereby created in the state treasury a special nonreverting fund to be known as the Virginia Slave Commission Fund, hereafter referred to as the "Fund." The Fund shall be established on the books of the Comptroller and shall consist of gifts, grants, donations, bequests, or other funds from any source as may be received by the Commission for its work. Moneys shall be paid into the state treasury and credited to the Fund. Interest earned on moneys in the Fund shall remain in the Fund and be credited to it. Any moneys remaining in the Fund, including interest thereon, at the end of each fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund but shall remain in the Fund. Moneys in the Fund shall be

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59 *used for the purpose of enabling the Commission to perform its duties. Expenditures and disbursements*
60 *from the Fund shall be made by the State Treasurer on warrants issued by the Comptroller upon written*
61 *request of the chairman of the Commission.*

62 *§ 30-333. Compensation; expenses.*

63 *Legislative members of the Commission shall receive such compensation as provided in § 30-19.12,*
64 *and nonlegislative citizen members shall receive such compensation for the performance of their duties*
65 *as provided in § 2.2-2813. All members shall be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses*
66 *incurred in the performance of their duties as provided in §§ 2.2-2813 and 2.2-2825. Funding for the*
67 *costs of compensation and expenses of the members shall be provided by the Commission from such*
68 *funds as it may receive.*

69 *§ 30-334. Powers and duties of the Commission.*

70 *The Virginia Slave Commission shall have the following powers and duties:*

71 *1. Assess the extent to which students and the public are knowledgeable concerning African*
72 *American history, the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in the*
73 *Commonwealth and the nation, and the contributions of African Americans to American society and the*
74 *world;*

75 *2. Determine whether and the extent to which African American history, information concerning the*
76 *African slave trade, slavery and its impact on and legacy in American society, and the achievements and*
77 *contributions of African Americans to the development of the Commonwealth and the nation are*
78 *integrated into the Standards of Learning, textbooks, and statewide student assessments;*

79 *3. Seek, receive, and expend gifts, grants, donations, bequests, or other funds from any source to*
80 *support the work of the Commission, implement the Commission's plans, and facilitate the objectives of*
81 *this chapter;*

82 *4. Inventory relevant African American historical sites, memorials, exhibits, and resources in the*
83 *Commonwealth and assess the potential economic impact of tourism and economic development*
84 *promotion relative to such sites;*

85 *5. Develop and maintain a roster of volunteer historians, educators, businesses, organizations, and*
86 *speakers to act as resource persons for classroom teachers on African American history, the African*
87 *slave trade, American slavery, the impact of slavery on modern society, and the contributions of African*
88 *Americans to the Commonwealth and the nation;*

89 *6. Provide appropriate memorialization of the events concerning the enslavement of Africans and*
90 *their descendants in America, as well as their struggle for freedom and liberty through such venues as*
91 *workshops, conferences, institutes, seminars, internships, professional teacher development, and other*
92 *programs and activities;*

93 *7. Promote the identification, preservation, and conservation of historic sites significant to the*
94 *presence and contributions of enslaved Africans in Virginia;*

95 *8. Appoint and establish an Advisory Council composed of nonlegislative citizens at large who shall*
96 *serve voluntarily and have a knowledge of African history and civilization; African American history;*
97 *Virginia history; the African-American Diaspora; American history and the institution of slavery;*
98 *Reconstruction; historical education and literacy; tourism and economic development; historic*
99 *preservation and archaeology; expertise and an interest in ensuring the perpetuation of the African*
100 *American ethos and society; and the preservation of historical and archeological sites and facilities*
101 *significant to African American history and culture in the Commonwealth. Members of the Advisory*
102 *Council shall serve without compensation or reimbursement for expenses as provided in §§ 2.2-2813 and*
103 *2.2-2825; however, the Chairman may approve the reimbursement of travel expenses incurred by*
104 *Advisory Council members in the conduct of Commission business;*

105 *9. Seek the assistance and collaboration of diverse organizations and interested parties, in Virginia*
106 *and out of state, with expertise, experience, and mutual interests, in order to facilitate the Commission's*
107 *work;*

108 *10. Submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an annual report for publication as a report*
109 *document as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the*
110 *processing of legislative documents and reports. The chairman shall submit to the Governor and the*
111 *General Assembly an annual executive summary of the interim activity and work of the Commission no*
112 *later than the first day of each regular session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall*
113 *be submitted for publication as a report document as provided in the procedures of the Division of*
114 *Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be*
115 *posted on the General Assembly's website; and*

116 *11. Perform such other duties, functions, and activities as the Commission deems necessary to*
117 *facilitate and implement the objectives of this chapter.*

118 *§ 30-335. Staffing.*

119 *The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support to the Commission. All agencies of*
120 *the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commission, upon request.*

121 2. For its first year of existence, if the Commission is not funded by a separate appropriation in
122 the Appropriation Act, the Commission may be funded from the operating budgets of the Clerk of
123 the House of Delegates and the Clerk of the Senate upon the approval of the Joint Rules
124 Committee. If the Commission is not funded by a separate appropriation in the appropriation act
125 for any year thereafter, this chapter shall expire on July 1 of the fiscal year that the Commission
126 fails to receive such funding.

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