

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2017 SESSION

CHAPTER 647

An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 22 of Title 23.1 an article numbered 5, consisting of sections numbered 23.1-2219, 23.1-2220, and 23.1-2221, relating to the identification of the history of formerly enslaved African Americans in Virginia.

[H 2296]

Approved March 20, 2017

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 22 of Title 23.1 an article numbered 5, consisting of sections numbered 23.1-2219, 23.1-2220, and 23.1-2221, as follows:

Article 5.

Virginia Foundation for the Humanities: Identification of the History of Formerly Enslaved African Americans in Virginia.

§ 23.1-2219. Virginia Foundation for the Humanities; identification of the history of formerly enslaved African Americans in Virginia.

A. With such funds as are appropriated by the General Assembly and with the agreement of the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities (the Foundation), the Foundation shall identify the history of formerly enslaved African Americans in Virginia and determine ways to preserve that history for educational and cultural purposes.

B. The Foundation shall:

1. Promote the identification, preservation, and conservation of historic sites significant to the history, presence, and contributions of formerly enslaved African Americans in Virginia;

2. Assess the extent to which students and the public are knowledgeable concerning African American history, the African slave trade, slavery in Virginia and America, and the vestiges of slavery in the Commonwealth and the nation;

3. Identify the contributions of African Americans to Virginia, the nation, and the world;

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

5. Develop a register of historical sites significant to African American history in Virginia that should be preserved and recommend options for preservation and ways to increase tourism revenues; and

6. Develop and maintain a roster of volunteer historians, educators, businesses, organizations, and speakers to act as resource persons for classroom teachers on African American history, the African slave trade, American slavery, the impact of slavery on modern society, and the contributions of African Americans to Virginia and the nation.

C. To assist the Foundation in its work, a task force is hereby created consisting of 12 members as follows: three 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; four nonlegislative citizen members to be appointed by the Governor, at least one of whom shall be a recognized historian with scholarship in American history and slavery. The Director of the Department of Historic Resources or his designee, the Director of the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia or his designee, and the President of the Foundation shall serve *ex officio*.

Legislative members shall serve terms coincident with their terms of office. Gubernatorial appointments shall be for a term of two years. Appointments to fill vacancies, other than by expiration of a term, shall be for the unexpired terms. Nonlegislative citizen members may be reappointed. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments.

The task force shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership, who shall be members of the General Assembly.

§ 23.1-2220. Quorum and meetings.

A majority of the members of the task force shall constitute a quorum. The task force shall meet no more than four times each year. The meetings of the task force shall be held at the call of the chairman or whenever the majority of the members so request.

§ 23.1-2221. Compensation; expenses.

Legislative members shall receive such compensation as provided in the general appropriation act, and the Foundation shall submit such attendance reports as necessary to the Clerk of the House of Delegates and the Clerk of the Senate to facilitate the payment of such compensation. From the appropriation to the Foundation, the Foundation shall pay nonlegislative citizen members such

compensation for the performance of their duties as provided in § 2.2-2813 and shall reimburse all members for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as provided in §§ 2.2-2813 and 2.2-2825.