

STATE OF NEW YORK

3204

2019-2020 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

February 4, 2019

Introduced by Sen. COMRIE -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Finance

AN ACT establishing the 400 Years of African-American History Commission; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The 400 Years of African-American History Commission, here-
2 inafter the "commission", is hereby established within the department of
3 state. The commission shall develop and carry out activities throughout
4 the state to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the arrival of Afri-
5 cans in the English colonies at Point Comfort, Virginia, in 1619.

6 § 2. (a) The commission shall consist of thirteen members, including
7 the secretary of state, or his or her designee, the commissioner of
8 education, or his or her designee, three members appointed by the gover-
9 nor, three members appointed by the temporary president of the senate,
10 three members appointed by the speaker of the assembly, one member
11 appointed by the senate minority leader, and one member appointed by the
12 assembly minority leader. Appointed members shall include but not be
13 limited to historians and those with a background in African-American
14 history, arts, or culture. Such appointments shall be made within 30
15 days of the effective date of this act.

16 (b) A vacancy on the commission shall be filled in the same manner in
17 which the original appointment was made.

18 (c) The members of the commission shall serve without compensation but
19 shall be entitled to reimbursement for all necessary expenses incurred
20 in the performance of their duties.

21 (d) The secretary of state, or his or her designee, shall serve as the
22 chair and shall appoint the vice-chair of the commission. The presence
23 of a majority of the authorized membership of the commission shall be
24 required for the conduct of official business.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD06194-01-9

1 (e) The department of state shall provide technical assistance and
2 data to the commission as may be necessary for the commission to carry
3 out its responsibilities pursuant to this act.

4 § 3. The commission shall:

5 (a) plan programs appropriate for the commemoration to:

6 (1) acknowledge the impact that slavery and laws that enforced racial
7 discrimination had on New York and the United States;

8 (2) recognize and highlight the resilience and contributions of Afri-
9 can-Americans since 1619; and

10 (3) educate the public about the arrival of Africans in the United
11 States and the contributions of African-Americans to New York and the
12 United States;

13 (b) encourage civic, patriotic, historical, educational, artistic,
14 religious, economic and other organizations to organize and participate
15 in anniversary activities to expand understanding and appreciation of
16 the significance of the arrival of Africans in New York and the United
17 States and the contributions of African-Americans to New York and the
18 United States;

19 (c) assist localities and nonprofit organizations to further the
20 commemoration;

21 (d) coordinate for the public scholarly research on the arrival of
22 Africans in the United States and their contributions to New York and
23 the United States;

24 (e) ensure that the commemoration provides a lasting legacy and long-
25 term public benefit by assisting in the development of appropriate
26 programs; and

27 (f) ensure that the observances of the commemoration are inclusive and
28 appropriately recognize the experiences and heritage of all individuals
29 present at the arrival of Africans in New York and the United States.

30 § 4. The commission may, from any monies appropriated for such
31 purposes, provide:

32 (a) grants to communities and nonprofit organizations for the develop-
33 ment of programs; and

34 (b) grants to research and scholarly organizations to research,
35 publish, or distribute information relating to the arrival of Africans
36 in New York and the United States.

37 § 5. The commission shall submit a report to the governor and the
38 legislature that contains a summary of its planned activities, an
39 accounting of its received and expended funds, and its findings and
40 recommendations on or before October 1, 2019.

41 § 6. The commission shall submit a report to the governor and the
42 legislature that contains a summary of its activities, a final account-
43 ing of its received and expended funds, and its findings and recommenda-
44 tions on or before June 1, 2021.

45 § 7. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire and be
46 deemed repealed July 1, 2021.