WEST VIRGINIA CODE CHAPTER 29 ARTICLE 36

WV Legislature

§29-36-1. Findings.

Findings—the Legislature finds that:

Over 15 percent of West Virginia's population is of Irish descent, which, according to the Irish diplomat Barbara Jones, represents a higher figure than that in Boston or New York City;

The ties that bind Ireland to West Virginia are deep and lasting, reflected on West Virginia's map from Ireland to Irish Mountain, from Tyrone to Tralee; and

Irish heritage has been the fortunate lot of many great West Virginians, such as philanthropist Bernard P. McDonough, the inventor Michael Owens, and US Senator John Kenna;

Ireland and West Virginia are attempting to reinvent their economies for success in the twenty-first century; and

West Virginians have both historic and practical reasons to desire the building of firmer commercial links with Ireland.

WV Legislature

§29-36-2. Establishment of commission; Composition; Appointments; Vacancies; Establishment of the West Virginia-Ireland Education Alliance.

(a) For these and other reasons, there is hereby established the West Virginia-Ireland Trade Commission. The commission shall consist of 9 members, to be appointed as follows:

(1) Two members of the Senate, who shall be appointed by the President of the Senate, shall have knowledge of or current or past involvement in organizations that promote Irish affairs, or shall have interest in education and the well-being of trade relations between West Virginia and Ireland; and two members of the House of Delegates, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates, shall have knowledge of or current or past involvement in organizations that promote Irish affairs, or shall have interest in education and the well-being of trade relations between West Virginia and Ireland. The legislative members of the commission shall serve during the two-year legislative term in which the appointments are made.

(2) Five members of the commission shall be appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, and shall serve for a term of four years. The members thus appointed shall include at least one representative from: a public institution of higher education; the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce, or its successor organization; and at least two public members shall represent Irish American communities or interest, neither of whom shall be members of the same political party.

(3) A vacancy in the membership of the commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made.

(b) There is hereby established the West Virginia-Ireland Education Alliance which shall partner West Virginia higher education institutions with Ireland higher education institutions to support student and faculty exchange programs and collaborative educational initiatives.

(1) Under the West Virginia-Ireland Education Alliance, a state four-year higher education institution and a state two-year higher education institution shall partner with one another to be eligible for a grant of up to $50,000, subject to appropriation by the Legislature.

(2) The Higher Education Policy Commission shall determine which partnered state four-year and two-year higher education institutions are eligible for one of the grants.

WV Legislature

§29-36-3. Compensation; Meetings; Chair; Records; Quorum.

(a) Members of the commission shall receive the same compensation authorized by law for members of the Legislature for the interim duties for each day, or portion thereof, the member is engaged in the discharge of official duties. All members shall be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the discharge of official duties, except that mileage shall be reimbursed at the same rate as that authorized for members of the Legislature.

(b) (1) The commission shall meet and hold hearings at the places it designates throughout the State.

(2) The commission shall elect a chair from amongst its members. The chair may appoint from among the commission members subcommittees and subcommittee chairs at their discretion.

(c) The commission shall keep records of all proceedings which shall be public and open to inspection, shall adopt a seal, and shall exercise and perform the duties prescribed by this section.

(d) A majority of the members of the commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of the commission.

WV Legislature

§29-36-4. Purpose of Commission and West Virginia–Ireland Education Alliance.

(a) The purpose of the West Virginia-Ireland Trade Commission shall be to:

(1) Advance bilateral trade and investment between West Virginia and Ireland;

(2) Initiate joint action on policy issues of mutual interest to West Virginia and Ireland;

(3) Promote business and academic exchanges between West Virginia and Ireland;

(4) Encourage mutual economic support between West Virginia and Ireland;

(5) Encourage mutual investment in the infrastructure of West Virginia and Ireland; and

(6) Address such other issues as determined by the Commission.

(b) The purpose of the West Virginia–Ireland Education Alliance is to strengthen academic, cultural, and workforce connections between West Virginia and Ireland, creating opportunities for shared learning and international engagement.

WV Legislature

§29-36-5. Reports

The commission shall report its findings, results, and recommendations to the Governor, and the Legislature, within one year of its initial organizational meeting and by February 1st of each succeeding year for the activities of the preceding calendar year. The report shall be in writing and include recommendations as deemed appropriate by the commission to effectuate its purpose, as provided by this section.

WV Legislature

§29-36-6. Funds.

The West Virginia-Ireland Trade Commission shall be authorized to raise funds, through direct solicitation or other fundraising events, alone, or with other groups, and accept gifts, grants, and bequests from individuals, corporations, foundations, governmental agencies, and public and private organizations and institutions, to defray the commission's administrative expenses and to carry out its purposes.

WV Legislature

§29-36-7. Effective Date.

This act shall take effect March 17, 2023.

WV Legislature