

CHAPTER 54

AN ACT establishing the New Jersey-Haiti Commission and supplementing chapter 18A of Title 52.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

C.52:16A-141 Findings, declarations.

1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

The State of New Jersey recognizes its historical ties with Haiti and economic concerns shared by its Haitian-American residents regarding the Republic of Haiti;

Haiti has faced significant challenges, including natural disasters, political instability, and socio-economic hardships;

It is imperative for New Jersey to recognize that it has the fourth largest Haitian population in the United States; and

The State should take concrete steps to address the economic challenges within its Haitian-American community and should work diligently to foster a mutual and beneficial relationship with Haiti.

C.52:16A-142 The New Jersey-Haiti Commission established.

2. a. The New Jersey-Haiti Commission is hereby created and established in the Department of State. The commission shall advise the Governor and Legislature on ways to improve economic and cultural links between the State and Haiti and on steps that may be taken to address the economic challenges within the State's Haitian-American community.

b. The commission shall consist of 13 members, including the Secretary of State, or a designee, who shall serve as chairperson, and 12 public members who shall represent a variety of different professional sectors across the State, including non-profit organizations serving the Haitian community. The public members shall be appointed as follows: six public members shall be appointed by the Governor, two public members shall be appointed by the Governor upon the recommendation of the President of the Senate, one public member shall be appointed by the Governor upon the recommendation of the Minority Leader of the Senate, two public members shall be appointed by the Governor upon the recommendation of the Speaker of the General Assembly, and one public member shall be appointed by the Governor upon the recommendation of the Minority Leader of the General Assembly.

c. Each public member of the commission shall serve for a term of three years, except that of the members first appointed, four shall be appointed to a term of one year, four shall be appointed to a term of two years, and four shall be appointed to a term of three years, as determined by the Governor. Public members shall be eligible for reappointment. The public members shall serve until their successors are appointed and qualified, and the term of the successor of any incumbent shall be calculated from the expiration of the term of that incumbent. A vacancy occurring other than the expiration of the term shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment but for the unexpired term only.

d. The members of the commission shall serve without compensation, but shall be entitled to reimbursement for all necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties within the limits of funds appropriated for that purpose.

e. The commission shall hold at least one public hearing on a quarterly basis and shall consult with stakeholders, experts, and members of the public to gather information related to the current economic challenges of the Haitian-American community in New Jersey and on the economic and cultural links between the State and Haiti.

C.52:16A-143 New Jersey-Haiti Commission, duties, objectives; report to Governor, Legislature.

3. a. The commission shall:

conduct a comprehensive review of historical ties between New Jersey and Haiti, including existing cultural exchanges, economic interactions, and the number of Haitians settling in New Jersey, as well as their patterns of migration to the State;

collect and analyze quantitative data, including census numbers, demographic trends, and economic indicators, to assess the current state of affairs in the Haitian-American community as related to civic engagement and their political and economic impacts in New Jersey and how the State can assist the Haitian-American community within the State;

analyze ways for New Jersey to establish a strong partnership and bilateral cooperation with Haiti, including, but not limited to, providing logistical and technical assistance related to access to healthcare and education and access to a fair and impartial judicial system;

identify areas for economic collaboration and partnership between New Jersey and Haiti, including, but not limited to, trade promotions, investment opportunities, and cultural exchanges; and

recommend policy initiatives, legislation, and programs to support economic development efforts in the Haitian-American community in this State and to support economic and cultural links in Haiti.

b. The commission may authorize studies, reports, and research projects to further its objectives and consult with State agencies, the Haitian government, and international and local organizations working on political, economic, and cultural issues related to Haiti.

c. The commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1) no later than one year after the date the commission first meets and annually thereafter.

d. The commission, through the Department of State, may solicit and receive grants and other funds that are made available for the commission's purposes by any governmental, public, private, not-for-profit, or for-profit entity, including funds that are made available under any federal or State law, regulation, or program.

4. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved May 9, 2025.