

ASSEMBLY, No. 5408

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 8, 2023

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman SHAVONDA E. SUMTER

District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes New Jersey-Africa Commission.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT creating the New Jersey-Africa Commission and
2 supplementing chapter 18A of Title 52 of the Revised Statutes.

3

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

6

7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. The State of New Jersey is fortunate to have a population of
9 multinational origin, which includes approximately one million
10 people who trace their ancestry to the continent of Africa, and more
11 recent African immigrants;

12 b. The nation states of Africa constitute emerging markets with
13 which businesses and organizations in New Jersey may engage in
14 mutually beneficial projects;

15 c. The new democratic governments on the continent of Africa
16 could benefit from the knowledge and practices of democratic
17 institutions in the State of New Jersey; and

18 d. The establishment of a New Jersey-Africa Commission
19 would facilitate cultural, trade, governmental, and educational
20 exchanges between the citizens, businesses, and organizations in the
21 State of New Jersey and their counterparts in African nations.

22

23 2. a. The New Jersey-Africa Commission is created and
24 established in the Executive Branch of the State Government. For
25 the purposes of complying with the provisions of Article V, Section
26 IV, paragraph 1 of the New Jersey Constitution, the commission is
27 allocated within the Department of the Treasury.

28 b. The commission shall consist of 21 members, including the
29 Director of the Division of Business Assistance, Marketing, and
30 International Trade, the Commissioner of Health, the Secretary of
31 State, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Commissioner of
32 Education, serving ex officio, and 16 public members.

33 The public members shall be appointed as follows: four public
34 members shall be appointed by the President of the Senate; four
35 public members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the General
36 Assembly; and eight public members shall be appointed by the
37 Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate.

38 c. Each public member of the commission shall serve for a
39 term of three years, expiring on January 1 in the appropriate year;
40 except that of the members first appointed, four shall be appointed
41 for a term of one year, six shall be appointed for a term of two
42 years, and six shall be appointed for a term of three years, as
43 determined by the Governor. Public members shall be eligible for
44 reappointment. The public members shall serve until their
45 successors are appointed and qualified, and the term of the
46 successor of any incumbent shall be calculated from the expiration
47 of the term of that incumbent. A vacancy occurring other than by

1 expiration of term shall be filled in the same manner as the original
2 appointment but for the unexpired term only.

3 d. The members of the commission shall serve without
4 compensation, but they shall be entitled to reimbursement for all
5 necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

6 e. The Governor shall designate a chairperson and, as
7 necessary, any co-chairpersons from among the commission
8 members. The commission shall meet upon the call of the
9 chairperson or of a majority of the commission members. The
10 presence of a majority of the authorized membership of the
11 commission shall be required for the conduct of official business.

12

13 3. The commission shall convene within 14 days following the
14 appointment of the last member and shall organize itself into five
15 committees, as follows:

16 a. a Committee on Economic Development and Trade, which
17 shall be headed by the Director of the Division of Business
18 Assistance, Marketing, and International Trade;

19 b. a Committee on Education and Human Resource
20 Development, which shall be headed by the Commissioner of
21 Education;

22 c. a Committee on Health and Medicine, which shall be headed
23 by the Commissioner of Health;

24 d. a Committee on Culture and Tourism, which shall be headed
25 by the Secretary of State; and

26 e. a Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources, which
27 shall be headed by the Secretary of Agriculture.

28 Each committee head may appoint a designee to organize the work
29 of each committee.

30

31 4. a. It shall be the responsibility of the commission to assist
32 the Division of Business Assistance, Marketing, and International
33 Trade, or its successor, with recommendations for a broad series of
34 exchanges between the State of New Jersey and identified nation
35 states on the African continent.

36 b. The commission shall report its findings and
37 recommendations to the Governor, and the Legislature pursuant to
38 section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), within one year of its
39 initial organizational meeting and by February 1st of each
40 succeeding year for the activities of the preceding calendar year.
41 The report shall be in writing and include such recommendations as
42 deemed appropriate by the commission to effectuate its purpose, as
43 provided by this section.

44

45 5. a. The Division of Business Assistance, Marketing, and
46 International Trade shall provide the staff assistance required in
47 order to support the work of the commission and its committees. In
48 addition, the commission and its committees are authorized to call

1 upon any department, office, division, or agency of the State to
2 supply such data, or other information and assistance as it deems
3 necessary to discharge the responsibilities of the commission.

4 b. These departments, offices, divisions, and agencies shall, to
5 the extent possible and not inconsistent with any other law of this
6 State, cooperate with the commission and its committees and shall
7 furnish it with such data, information, and assistance as may be
8 necessary or helpful to accomplish the purposes of the commission.
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10 6. This act shall take effect immediately.
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12

13 STATEMENT
14

15 This bill establishes the New Jersey-Africa Commission
16 (“commission”) which shall consist of 21 members, of whom five
17 are State cabinet members who shall serve ex officio. For the
18 purposes of complying with the State Constitution, the commission
19 is to be allocated within the Department of the Treasury.

20 Of the 16 public members, four are to be appointed by the
21 President of the Senate, four by the Speaker of the General
22 Assembly, and eight by the Governor with the advice and consent
23 of the Senate. Public members are to serve staggered terms of three
24 years. Members of the commission shall serve without
25 compensation, but may be reimbursed for their expenses. The bill
26 requires that the Governor designate a chairperson and any co-
27 chairpersons deemed necessary by the Governor.

28 The commission is to organize itself into five committees, as
29 follows: 1) a Committee on Economic Development and Trade, to
30 be headed by the Director of the Division of Business Assistance,
31 Marketing, and International Trade; 2) a Committee on Education
32 and Human Resource Development, to be headed by the
33 Commissioner of Education; 3) a Committee on Health and
34 Medicine, to be headed by the Commissioner of Health; 4) a
35 Committee on Culture and Tourism, to be headed by the Secretary
36 of State; and 5) a Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources,
37 to be headed by the Secretary of Agriculture.

38 The commission’s responsibility under the bill is to make
39 recommendations to the Division of Business Assistance,
40 Marketing, and International Trade for a broad series of exchanges
41 between the State of New Jersey and African nations. Within one
42 year of the commission’s initial organizational meeting, the
43 commission is required to issue an interim report of its work and
44 provide a copy to the Governor, each member of the Senate and
45 each member of the General Assembly. Thereafter, annual reports
46 shall be issued by February 1st of each succeeding year for the
47 activities of the preceding calendar year.

A5408 SUMTER

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1 This bill requires that staff support for the commission and its
2 committees be provided by the Division of Business Assistance,
3 Marketing, and International Trade. Accordingly, the bill provides
4 no appropriation to the New Jersey-Africa Commission.