

**SENATE, No. 3199**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**221st LEGISLATURE**

INTRODUCED MAY 9, 2024

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator BRITNEE N. TIMBERLAKE**

**District 34 (Essex)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes New Jersey-Haiti Commission.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



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

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

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7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

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

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

13 It is imperative for New Jersey to recognize that it has the 4th  
14 largest Haitian population in the United States; and

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

18

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

25 b. The commission shall consist of 13 members, including the  
26 Secretary of State, or a designee, who shall serve as chairperson,  
27 and 12 public members who shall represent a variety of different  
28 professional sectors across the State, including non-profit  
29 organizations serving the Haitian community. The public members  
30 shall be appointed by the Governor as follows: four public members  
31 shall be appointed upon the recommendation of the President of the  
32 Senate, four public members shall be appointed upon the  
33 recommendation of the Minority Leader of the Senate; four public  
34 members shall be appointed upon the recommendation of the  
35 Speaker of the General Assembly, and four public members shall be  
36 appointed upon the recommendation of the Minority Leader of the  
37 General Assembly.

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

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

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

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12 3. a. The commission shall:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1       4. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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6       This bill establishes the New Jersey-Haiti Commission in the  
7 Department of State. The commission shall advise the Governor  
8 and Legislature on ways to improve economic and cultural links  
9 between the State and Haiti and on steps that may be taken to  
10 address the economic challenges within the State's Haitian-  
11 American community.

12       The commission will have 13 members. The Secretary of State,  
13 will serve as chairperson, and 12 members of the public will be  
14 appointed to represent a variety of different professional sectors  
15 across the State, including non-profit organizations in serving the  
16 Haitian community. The commission will hold one or more  
17 meetings on a quarterly basis.

18       The commission may conduct studies, reports, and research  
19 projects to further its objectives, and consult with State agencies,  
20 the Haitian government, and international and local organizations  
21 working on political, economic, and cultural issues related to Haiti.  
22 The commission will make recommendations for policies,  
23 legislation, and initiatives related to the economic challenges of the  
24 Haitian-American community in the State and identify areas for  
25 economic collaboration and partnership between New Jersey and  
26 Haiti. The commission will report its findings and  
27 recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature annually.