MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2018

By: Representative Hood To: Tourism

HOUSE BILL NO. 1421

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A MISSISSIPPI GOSPEL MUSIC COMMISSION TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO PROMOTE AUTHENTIC MISSISSIPPI "GOSPEL" MUSIC AND "GOSPEL MUSIC CULTURE" FOR PURPOSES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT; TO PRESCRIBE THE FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION; TO EMPOWER THE COMMISSION TO ACCEPT AND EXPEND GRANT FUNDS; TO PROVIDE FOR INTERDEPARTMENTAL COOPERATION; TO AUTHORIZE AND DIRECT THE DIVISION OF TOURISM OF THE MISSISSIPPI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH A STATEWIDE MISSISSIPPI "GOSPEL MUSIC TRAIL" INFRASTRUCTURE TO OFFER TO TOURISTS AND TARGETED GROUPS A STRUCTURED TOUR OF MISSISSIPPI GOSPEL MUSIC HISTORICAL SITES AND PERFORMANCE VENUES; TO AUTHORIZE THE DIVISION TO DESIGNATE AND ERECT APPROPRIATE "MISSISSIPPI GOSPEL MUSIC TRAIL" HISTORICAL MARKERS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. (1) There is hereby created the Mississippi Gospel Music Commission, hereinafter referred to as the "commission." The commission may accept and expend grants and private donations from any source, including federal, state, public and private entities, to assist it to carry out its functions.

(2) For purposes of this act, the term "gospel music" shall mean gospel, Christian, praise and worship and related music genre and the culture that created it.

(3) The powers, functions and duties of the commission shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(a) To study, deliberate and report to the Governor and the Legislature on or before January 1, 2019, on the best method to market and foster an appreciation of gospel, to include tourism, academic study and gospel music archives, gospel music historical preservation, gospel music cultural education and the support of performing artists. Such marketing plan shall be designed to attract tourists, conferences, music performances, filmmakers and others for the purpose of economic development of all geographic areas of the state through the promotion of gospel music and the heritage and culture that produced such, and to analyze the tourism potential of the gospel music for Mississippi.

(b) To make an inventory of gospel music "assets" that make up gospel music and its culture that could be developed into a program for domestic and international tourism, and opportunities for investment.

(c) Coordination with the Division of Tourism of the Mississippi Development Authority, the Department of Archives and History, the Mississippi Department of Transportation, the Mississippi Educational Television Authority, the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning, the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi, the Mississippi Arts Commission, and similar organizations to

share resources and information in order to ensure a comprehensive approach to marketing the gospel music culture in Mississippi.

(d) To make recommendations regarding the establishment of, and budgeting for, a permanent Mississippi office of gospel music as an agency of state government with an executive director and appropriate staff to carry out the marketing plan developed by the commission. To the extent practical, any office shall be located at an existing public or private location which is appropriate to the gospel music culture in Mississippi, with minimal cost to the state.

(e) Coordination of the gospel music marketing plan with any existing state historic preservation programs, in order to:

(i) Identify and preserve gospel music historic properties;

(ii) Determine the eligibility of such properties for listing on the National Register;

(iii) Prepare nominations of such sites for inclusion on the National Register;

(iv) Maintenance of gospel music historical and archaeological databases; and

(v) Evaluation of such sites for eligibility for state and federal preservation incentives.

(f) To implement and continue the development and creation of the Mississippi Gospel Music Trail as outlined in

Section 2 of this act, provide oversight of the trail and its infrastructure, and explore funding opportunities to support continued implementation.

(4) The commission shall be composed of the following members:

(a) The Director of the Division of Tourism of the Mississippi Development Authority;

(b) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, or his or her designee;

(c) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Arts Commission, or his or her designee;

(d) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Educational Television Authority, or his or her designee;

(e) The Chairman of the Board of the Southern Arts and Entertainment Center, or his or her designee;

(f) The Director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi;

(g) The State Director of the USDA Rural Development Agency;

(h) Two (2) members of the Mississippi Senate designated by the Lieutenant Governor, who shall serve on a nonvoting basis;

(i) Two (2) members of the Mississippi House of Representatives designated by the Speaker of the House, who shall serve on a nonvoting basis;

(j) Two (2) members appointed by the Governor, who shall have experience in cultural affairs or tourism development in East Central Mississippi; and

(k) Four (4) members appointed by the Governor from the state at large, who shall have demonstrated a commitment to the understanding and promotion of gospel music.

(5) The Governor shall designate one (1) commission member to serve as chairman for a term concurrent with that of the Governor. The commission shall meet upon the call of the chairman not later than August 1, 2018, and shall organize for business by adopting internal organizational procedures necessary for efficient operation of the commission, including officers, quorum requirements and policies for any commission staff. Each member of the commission shall designate necessary staff of his or her respective agency, department, university or business entity, as the case may be, to provide administrative support to assist the commission in performing its duties and responsibilities. The commission shall meet and conduct business at least quarterly. Meetings of the commission shall be open to the public and opportunity for public comment shall be made available.

(6) Members of the commission shall receive no compensation for their services.

(7) The commission shall submit a report, including any proposed legislation, to the Governor and to the Legislature before the convening of the 2019 Regular Session. The report

shall include a comprehensive state plan for marketing gospel music history as specifically provided above.

(8) All departments, boards, agencies, officers and institutions of the state and all subdivisions thereof shall cooperate with the commission in carrying out its purposes under this act.

(9) Any funds or donations received by the commission shall be deposited into a special fund which is created in the State Treasury, and disbursement therefrom shall be made upon warrants by the Department of Finance and Administration after receipt of requisitions submitted by the appropriate person designated by the commission. Monies in the special fund may be used by the commission in carrying out its responsibilities under this act. Unexpended amounts remaining in the special fund at the end of a fiscal year shall not lapse into the State General Fund, and any interest earned or investment earnings on amounts in the fund shall be deposited to the credit of the special fund.

SECTION 2. The Division of Tourism of the Mississippi Development Authority is authorized and directed to do the following:

(a) To make an inventory of gospel music "assets" that make up the gospel music culture that could be developed into a program for domestic and international tourism, and opportunities for investment.

(b) To establish a statewide Mississippi "Gospel Music Trail" infrastructure to offer to tourists and target groups a structured tour of Mississippi gospel music historical sites and performance venues.

(c) To designate specific sites for the erection of appropriate "Mississippi Gospel Music Trail" markers to offer to tourists and targeted groups a structured tour of Mississippi gospel music historical sites and performance venues. The division shall be authorized to purchase appropriate Mississippi Gospel Music Trail markers from any of its available funds. The texts for the Mississippi Gospel Music Trail markers shall be approved by the division. The Mississippi Department of Transportation shall cooperate with the division by erecting and maintaining the markers that have been approved by the division.

(d) To coordinate the Mississippi Gospel Music Trail program with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the Mississippi Department of Transportation, the Mississippi Educational Television Authority, the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning, the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi, the Delta Center for Culture and Learning at Delta State University, the Mississippi Arts Commission and similar organizations to share resources and information in order to ensure a comprehensive approach to marketing the gospel music and gospel music culture in Mississippi.

(e) To coordinate the Mississippi Gospel Music Trail marketing plan with any existing state historic preservation program, in order to identify and preserve gospel music historic properties, and determine the eligibility of such properties for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, and prepare nominations of such sites.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.