

Excerpt from 2024 Appropriation Act - Enabling Legislation

Commission to Study the History of the Uprooting of Black Communities by Public Institutions of Higher Education in the Commonwealth

U.1. The Commission to Study the History of the Uprooting of Black Communities by Public Institutions of Higher Education in the Commonwealth (the Commission) is established in the legislative branch of state government. The purpose of the Commission is to study and determine (i) whether any public institution of higher education has purchased, expropriated, or otherwise taken possession of property owned by any individual or entity within the boundaries of a community in which a majority of the residents are Black in order to establish or expand the institution's campus and (ii) whether and what form of compensation or relief would be appropriate for any individual described in clause (i) or any of his lineal descendants. As used in this chapter, "public institution of higher education" has the same meaning as provided in § 23.1-100, Code of Virginia.

2. The Commission shall consist of 19 members that include ten legislative members, seven nonlegislative citizen members, and 2 ex officio members. Members shall be appointed as follows: six members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates; four members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; four nonlegislative citizen members to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; three nonlegislative citizen members to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; and the Secretary of Education and the Director of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia or their designees to serve ex officio with voting privileges. Nonlegislative citizen members of the Commission shall be citizens of the Commonwealth. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the chair of the Commission and the respective Clerk, nonlegislative citizen members shall only be reimbursed for travel originating and ending within the Commonwealth for the purpose of attending meetings.

3. Legislative members and ex officio members of the Commission shall serve terms coincident with their terms of office. Nonlegislative citizen members shall be appointed for a term of two years. Appointments to fill vacancies, other than by expiration of a term, shall be for the unexpired terms. Legislative members and nonlegislative citizen members may be reappointed. However, no nonlegislative citizen member shall serve more than four consecutive two-year terms. The remainder of any term to which a member is appointed to fill a vacancy shall not constitute a term in determining the member's eligibility for reappointment. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments. The Commission shall elect a chair and vice-chair from among its membership, who shall be members of the General Assembly.

4. Legislative members of the Commission shall receive such compensation as provided in § 30-19.12, and nonlegislative citizen members shall receive such compensation for the performance of their duties as provided in § 2.2-2813. All members shall be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as provided in §§ 2.2-2813 and 2.2-2825. Compensation to members of the General Assembly for attendance at official meetings of the Commission shall be paid by the offices of the Clerk of

the House of Delegates or Clerk of the Senate, as applicable. All other compensation and expenses shall be paid from existing appropriations to the Commission or, if unfunded, shall be approved by the Joint Rules Committee.

5. The Commission shall have the following duties:

a. Consult with each public institution of higher education to determine whether the institution has purchased, expropriated, or otherwise taken possession of property owned by any individual within the boundaries of a community in which a majority of the residents are Black in order to establish or expand the institution's campus;

b. Research whether acquisitions similar to those described in subdivision 1 have occurred in other states;

c. Analyze, in conjunction with the relevant public institution of higher education and such other stakeholders as it deems appropriate, whether and what form of compensation or relief would be appropriate for any individual described in subdivision 1 or any of his lineal descendants; and

d. Consult with such experts as it deems appropriate to assist it in carrying out its duties as set forth in this section.