

1 AN ACT concerning State government.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Office
5 of Genealogical Affairs Study Commission Act.

6 Section 5. Legislative findings and purpose.

7 (a) The General Assembly finds that:

8 (1) Illinois has a documented history of slavery,
9 coerced labor, family separation, racial violence, and
10 State-sanctioned discrimination, including, but not
11 limited to, the enslavement of African Americans at
12 State-operated salt mines, the enforcement of Black Codes,
13 and the long-term exclusion of African American families
14 from full civic participation.

15 (2) These historical practices resulted in the
16 systematic destruction, fragmentation, or non-creation of
17 genealogical records for African American families and
18 other historically displaced populations, impairing their
19 ability to document family identity, lineage, and
20 inheritance.

21 (3) Illinois recognizes genealogical access as a
22 public service and democratic good through its archival,
23 records preservation, and genealogical programs, and it

1 recognizes family identity as a legally protected interest
2 for the purposes of adoption, parentage, and child welfare
3 law.

4 (4) Genealogical knowledge serves not only
5 administrative purposes but also reparative, forensic,
6 public health, and psychosocial functions, including
7 identity formation, family reunification, historical
8 accountability, and access to health-related genetic
9 information.

10 (5) The State lacks an integrated framework for
11 delivering genealogical services across restorative,
12 forensic, and administrative domains, particularly where
13 traditional documentation is absent.

14 (b) Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to commission a
15 comprehensive study on the establishment of an Office of
16 Genealogical Affairs, grounded in Illinois law and public
17 service traditions, to determine how the State may equitably
18 provide genealogical services that support identity repair,
19 historical accountability, and, where applicable,
20 administrative determinations.

21 Section 10. Office of Genealogical Affairs Study
22 Commission.

23 (a) The Office of Genealogical Affairs Study Commission is
24 created. The members of the Commission shall be as follows:

25 (1) 10 public members appointed by the Governor with

1 specialties in the following areas or with the following
2 expertise:

3 (A) expertise in anthropology and population
4 genetics genealogy;

5 (B) expertise in biological anthropology;

6 (C) expertise in cultural anthropology;

7 (D) specialty in archival studies;

8 (E) specialty in historical studies;

9 (F) specialty in genealogy;

10 (G) specialty in psycho-social or psycho-mental
11 health; and

12 (H) specialty in data governance, privacy, and
13 security;

14 (2) 2 members that are descendant community leadership
15 representatives appointed by the Governor;

16 (3) one public health professional from a
17 nongovernmental organization or academic institution
18 appointed by the Governor;

19 (4) one member appointed by the President of the
20 Senate;

21 (5) one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the
22 Senate;

23 (6) one member appointed by the Speaker of the House
24 of Representatives;

25 (7) one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the
26 House of Representatives; and

1 (8) 3 ex officio members:

2 (A) the Secretary of State, as the State
3 Archivist, or the Secretary's designee; and

4 (B) the Director of the Illinois State Archives,
5 or the Director's designee.

6 (C) a Director of the Illinois State Genealogical
7 Society or a Director's designee.

8 (b) Commission members appointed under paragraphs (3)
9 through (6) of subsection (a) shall co-chair the Commission.

10 (c) Each Commission member shall serve for a term of 2
11 years or until his or her successor is appointed and
12 qualified, except in the case of initial appointees who shall
13 serve for a period of 2 years after the effective date of this
14 Act.

15 (d) Beginning August 2026, the Commission shall meet
16 monthly, whether in-person or virtually, or as called by the
17 co-chairs of the Commission.

18 Section 15. Duties of the Commission.

19 (a) The Commission shall have the following duties:

20 (1) to examine the feasibility, scope, and structure
21 of a permanent Office of Genealogical Affairs within State
22 government;

23 (2) to examine how an Office of Genealogical Affairs
24 could operationalize reparative genealogical services;

25 (3) to examine how an Office of Genealogical Affairs

1 could support forensic and historical accountability
2 efforts; and

3 (4) to examine how an Office of Genealogical Affairs
4 could support administrative genealogical determinations.

5 (b) The Commission may engage with experts with the
6 approval of the chairperson or co-chairs and shall receive the
7 cooperation of those State agencies it deems appropriate to
8 assist the Commission in carrying out its duties.

9 (c) The Commission may consult with the Department of
10 Human Services, the Department of Public Health, the Illinois
11 State Archives, and the African Descent-Citizens Reparations
12 Commission to provide information or related data to support
13 the Commission's work.

14 Section 20. Report to the Governor and General Assembly.
15 No later than 20 months after the effective date of this Act,
16 the Commission shall prepare a report to the Governor and the
17 General Assembly, which shall include, but shall not be
18 limited to:

19 (1) a recommended statutory placement, governance
20 structure, and staffing model for an Office of
21 Genealogical Affairs;

22 (2) a phased implementation plan prioritizing
23 reparative forensic services;

24 (3) an ethical, legal, and data-governance framework
25 for genealogical and genetic genealogy services;

1 (4) a description of the estimated costs, funding
2 mechanisms, and interagency coordination needs; and

3 (5) a description of the options for pilot programs
4 and statewide scaling.

5 Section 25. Construction. Nothing in this Act shall be
6 construed to mandate genetic testing, limit access to existing
7 genealogical services, or authorize the use of genealogical
8 data for surveillance or for law enforcement purposes.

9 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
10 becoming law.