

Introduced by Senator Sears

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: General provisions; Vermont 250th Commission

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to create the Vermont 250th Celebration Commission.

An act creating the Vermont 250th Celebration Commission

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. FINDINGS

2027 will mark the 250th anniversary of: the Vermont Declaration of Independence, adopted on January 15, 1777 in Westminster; the Battle of Hubbardton, fought on July 7th, 1777; the original Vermont Constitution, adopted on July 8, 1777 in Windsor; and the American victory at the Battle of Bennington, fought on August 16, 1777. These historic events are central to the history of our State and merit a coordinated set of commemorative celebrations that promote civic pride, tourism, and scholarship.

Sec. 2. VERMONT 250TH COMMISSION; CREATION; REPORT

(a) Creation. There is created the Vermont 250th Celebration Commission.

(b) Membership. The Commission shall be composed of nine members from geographically diverse parts of the state who are well connected in their respective regions and have a background or strong interest in Vermont history to be appointed by the following:

(1) two members, who shall not be members of the House, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House;

(2) two members, who shall not be members of the Senate, who shall be appointed by the Committee on Committees;

(3) two members, one from the House, and one from the Senate, to be appointed by the Governor;

(4) the State Historic Preservation Officer or designee;

(5) the Executive Director of the Vermont Historical Society or designee;

(6) the Executive Director of the Bennington Area Chamber of Commerce or designee.

(7) representatives from the Agency of Education and the Department of Tourism in an advisory role for the duration of the Commission.

(c) Powers and duties. The Commission shall plan and sponsor events statewide for both the general public and the scholarly community commemorating the 250th anniversary of the adoption of the Vermont Declaration of In-

dependence and the first Vermont Constitution and the American victory at the Battle of Bennington. This shall include planning for events leading up to the 250th starting in 2025 to include the capture of fort Ticonderoga and Crown Point by the Green Mountain Boys; and the Federal Declaration of Independence in 2026; as well as other events that the Commission deems important to include in order to fully prepare for 2027. This shall also include the Agency of Education in developing and implementing curriculum to educate students on the events identified by the Commission. In conducting its work, the Commission may consult and partner with appropriate Federal agencies, State and local public bodies, learned societies, and historical, patriotic, philanthropic, civic, professional, and related organizations, and private and public sector organizations in Vermont and other states.

(d) Report. On or before February 15, 2020, the Commission shall submit a written report to the House Committees on Appropriations and on Government Operations and the Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Government Operations, proposing a long-term budget, including an allocation of State and private sector costs and an initial description of events that the Commission may plan and sponsor.

(e) Meetings.

(1) The President of the Board of the Greater Bennington Area Chamber of Commerce or it's designee shall call the first meeting of the Commission, to occur on or before September 1, 2020.

(2) The Committee at its first meeting shall select a chair from among its members.

(3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

(4) A member attending remotely may count toward the quorum and cast a vote.

(5) The Commission shall not be limited to a specific number of meetings. But it may not spend funds beyond the amount of the appropriation provided for in subsection (g) of this section.

(6) The Commission shall cease to exist on December 31, 2027.

(f) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Commission who are not employees of the State of Vermont and are not otherwise reimbursed for their attendance shall be entitled to reimbursement of expenses, pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1010, to the extent funds appropriated for the Commission remain available.

(g) Appropriations. The sum of \$27,000 is appropriated to the Vermont 250th Commission from the General Fund in fiscal year 2019; \$2,000.00 for reimbursement of expenses for members of the Commission and for miscella-

neous administrative costs the Commission may incur and \$25,000.00 for costs related to education, marketing, and administrative expenses associated with the first year of work of the Commission.

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2019.