

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1596

To establish the Commission to study the potential creation of a National Museum of Irish American History, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 17, 2017

Mr. BYRNE (for himself, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. NEAL, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. LYNCH, and Mr. MCGOVERN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To establish the Commission to study the potential creation of a National Museum of Irish American History, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Commission to Study
5 the Creation of a National Museum of Irish American His-
6 tory”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission”
4 means the Commission to study the potential cre-
5 ation of a National Museum of Irish American His-
6 tory established by section 3(a).

7 (2) MUSEUM.—The term “Museum” means the
8 National Museum of Irish American History.

9 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.**

10 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—There is established the
12 Commission to study the potential creation of an
13 Irish American Museum.

14 (2) MEMBERSHIP.—The Commission shall con-
15 sist of 23 members appointed not later than 6
16 months after the date of the enactment of this Act
17 as follows:

18 (A) The President shall appoint 7 voting
19 members.

20 (B) The Speaker of the House of Rep-
21 resentatives, the Minority Leader of the House
22 of Representatives, the Majority Leader of the
23 Senate, and the Minority Leader of the Senate
24 shall each appoint—

25 (i) 3 voting members; and

26 (ii) 1 nonvoting member.

1 (3) QUALIFICATIONS.—Members of the Com-
2 mission shall be chosen from individuals, or rep-
3 resentatives of institutions or entities, who possess
4 either—

5 (A) a demonstrated commitment to the re-
6 search, study, or promotion of Irish-American
7 life, art, history, political or economic status, or
8 culture, together with—

9 (i) expertise in museum administra-
10 tion;

11 (ii) expertise in fundraising for non-
12 profit or cultural institutions;

13 (iii) experience in the study and
14 teaching of Irish-American culture and his-
15 tory at the post-secondary level;

16 (iv) experience in studying the issue of
17 the Smithsonian Institution's representa-
18 tion of Irish-American art, life, history,
19 and culture; or

20 (v) extensive experience in public or
21 elected service; or

22 (B) experience in the administration of, or
23 the planning for the establishment of, museums
24 devoted to the study and promotion of the role

1 of ethnic, racial, or cultural groups in American
2 history.

3 (4) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Commis-
4 sion—

5 (A) shall not affect the powers of the Com-
6 mission; and

7 (B) shall be filled in the same manner as
8 the original appointment was made.

9 (5) CHAIRPERSON.—The Commission shall, by
10 majority vote of all of the members, select 1 member
11 of the Commission to serve as the Chairperson of
12 the Commission.

13 **SEC. 4. DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION.**

14 (a) REPORTS.—

15 (1) PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT
16 AND MAINTENANCE OF MUSEUM.—The Commission
17 shall submit a report to the President and the Con-
18 gress containing its recommendations with respect to
19 a plan of action for the establishment and mainte-
20 nance of an Irish-American Museum in Washington,
21 D.C.

22 (2) REPORT ON ISSUES.—The Commission shall
23 examine, in consultation with the Secretary of the
24 Smithsonian Institution, and submit a report to the
25 President and the Congress on the following issues:

1 (A) The availability and cost of collections
2 to be acquired and housed in the Museum.

3 (B) The impact of the Museum on regional
4 Irish-American-related museums.

5 (C) Possible locations for the Museum in
6 Washington, D.C. and its environs, to be con-
7 sidered in consultation with the National Cap-
8 ital Planning Commission and the Commission
9 of Fine Arts, the Department of the Interior,
10 and Smithsonian Institution.

11 (D) Whether the Museum should be lo-
12 cated within the Smithsonian Institution.

13 (E) The governance and organizational
14 structure from which the Museum should oper-
15 ate.

16 (F) How to engage the Irish-American
17 community in the development and design of
18 the Museum.

19 (G) The cost of constructing, operating,
20 and maintaining the Museum.

21 (b) FUNDRAISING PLAN.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall de-
23 velop a fundraising plan to support the establish-
24 ment, operation, and maintenance of the Museum
25 through contributions from the public.

1 (2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In developing the fund-
2 raising plan under paragraph (1), the Commission
3 shall consider issues relating to funding the oper-
4 ations and maintenance of the Museum in perpetuity
5 without reliance on appropriations of Federal funds.

6 (c) INDEPENDENT REVIEW.—The Commission shall
7 obtain an independent review of the viability of the plan
8 developed under subsection (b)(1) and such review shall
9 include an analysis as to whether the plan is likely to
10 achieve the level of resources necessary to fund the con-
11 struction of the Museum and the operations and mainte-
12 nance of the Museum in perpetuity without reliance on
13 appropriations of Federal funds.

14 (d) SUBMISSION.—The Commission shall submit the
15 plan developed under subsection (b)(1) and the review con-
16 ducted under paragraph (3) to the Committees on Trans-
17 portation and Infrastructure, House Administration, Nat-
18 ural Resources, and Appropriations of the House of Rep-
19 resentatives and the Committees on Rules and Adminis-
20 tration, Energy and Natural Resources, and Appropria-
21 tions of the Senate.

22 (e) RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEGISLATION TO
23 CARRY OUT PLAN OF ACTION.—Based on the rec-
24 ommendations contained in the report submitted under
25 subsection (a), the Commission shall submit for consider-

1 action recommendations for a legislative plan of action to
2 create and construct the Museum to—

3 (1) the Committee on Transportation and In-
4 frastructure of the House of Representatives;

5 (2) the Committee on House Administration of
6 the House of Representatives;

7 (3) the Committee on Rules and Administration
8 of the Senate;

9 (4) the Committee on Natural Resources of the
10 House of Representatives;

11 (5) the Committee on Energy and Natural Re-
12 sources of the Senate; and

13 (6) the Committees on Appropriations of the
14 House of Representatives and the Senate

15 (f) DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF REPORTS.—The
16 Commission shall submit final versions the reports and
17 plans required—

18 (1) under subsection (a) and (b) not later than
19 24 months after the date of the Commission’s first
20 meeting; and

21 (2) under subsection (e) not later than 12
22 months after the date that the reports and plans re-
23 ferred to in paragraph (1) are submitted.

24 (g) NATIONAL CONFERENCE.—In carrying out its
25 functions under this section, not later than 18 months

1 after the commission members are selected, the Commis-
2 sion may host a national conference on the Museum, com-
3 prised of individuals committed to the advancement of
4 Irish-American life, art, history, and culture.

5 **SEC. 5. DIRECTOR AND STAFF OF COMMISSION.**

6 (a) DIRECTOR AND STAFF.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission may em-
8 ploy and compensate an executive director and any
9 other additional personnel that are necessary to en-
10 able the Commission to perform the duties of the
11 Commission.

12 (2) RATES OF PAY.—Rates of pay for persons
13 employed under paragraph (1) shall be consistent
14 with the rates of pay allowed for employees of a tem-
15 porary organization under section 3161 of title 5,
16 United States Code.

17 (b) NOT FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT.—Any individual
18 employed under this Act shall not be considered a Federal
19 employee for the purpose of any law governing Federal
20 employment.

21 (c) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), on
23 request of the Commission the head of a Federal
24 agency may provide technical assistance to the Com-
25 mission.

1 (2) DETAILEES.—No Federal employees may be
2 detailed to the Commission.

3 **SEC. 6. ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS.**

4 (a) COMPENSATION.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—A member of the Commis-
6 sion—

7 (A) shall not be considered to be a Federal
8 employee for any purpose by reason of service
9 on the Commission; and

10 (B) shall serve without pay.

11 (2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the
12 Commission shall be allowed a per diem allowance
13 for travel expenses, at rates consistent with those
14 authorized under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title
15 5, United States Code.

16 (b) GIFTS, BEQUESTS, DEVISES.—The Commission
17 may solicit, accept, use, and dispose of gifts, bequests, or
18 devises of money, services, or real or personal property for
19 the purpose of aiding or facilitating the work of the Com-
20 mission.

21 (c) FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT.—The
22 Commission is not subject to the provisions of the Federal
23 Advisory Committee Act.

1 **SEC. 7. TERMINATION.**

2 The Commission shall terminate on the date that is
3 30 days after the date on which the final versions of the
4 reports and plans required under section 4 are submitted.

5 **SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION FOR APPROPRIATIONS.**

6 There are authorized to be appropriated for carrying
7 out the activities of the Commission—

8 (1) \$2,100,000 for the first fiscal year begin-
9 ning after the date of the enactment of this Act; and

10 (2) \$1,100,000 for the second fiscal year begin-
11 ning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

○