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SENATE BILL

**56TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2024**

INTRODUCED BY

William E. Sharer

AN ACT

RELATING TO CULTURAL AFFAIRS; CREATING THE SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL  
COMMISSION TO PLAN, PROMOTE AND IMPLEMENT CELEBRATIONS  
COMMEMORATING THE TWO HUNDRED FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND THE FOUNDING OF THE UNITED  
STATES OF AMERICA; PROVIDING POWERS AND DUTIES; MAKING AN  
APPROPRIATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. TEMPORARY PROVISION--SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL  
COMMISSION CREATED--MEMBERSHIP--CULTURAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT TO  
STAFF--TERMINATION.--

A. The "semiquincentennial commission" is created  
in the cultural affairs department to plan, promote and  
implement public celebrations and commemorations of the two  
hundred fiftieth anniversary of the declaration of independence

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1 and the two hundred fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the  
2 United States of America on July 4, 2026.

3 B. The commission consists of the following  
4 members:

5 (1) the governor, who shall serve as the  
6 honorary chair of the commission;

7 (2) the lieutenant governor or the lieutenant  
8 governor's designee;

9 (3) the president pro tempore of the senate or  
10 the president pro tempore's designee;

11 (4) the speaker of the house of  
12 representatives or the speaker's designee;

13 (5) the secretary of cultural affairs or the  
14 secretary's designee;

15 (6) the secretary of higher education or the  
16 secretary's designee;

17 (7) the secretary of Indian affairs or the  
18 secretary's designee;

19 (8) the secretary of public education or the  
20 secretary's designee;

21 (9) the secretary of tourism or the  
22 secretary's designee;

23 (10) the adjutant general of the New Mexico  
24 national guard or the adjutant general's designee;

25 (11) the state historian; and

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1 (12) four public members appointed by the  
2 governor.

3 C. The cultural affairs department shall provide  
4 staff support to the commission.

5 D. Public members of the commission shall be  
6 appointed for the life of the commission and shall serve at the  
7 pleasure of the governor. Vacancies on the commission shall be  
8 filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was  
9 made.

10 E. Public members of the commission shall receive  
11 per diem and mileage as provided in the Per Diem and Mileage  
12 Act and shall receive no other compensation, perquisite or  
13 allowance.

14 F. The commission shall terminate on December 31,  
15 2026.

16 SECTION 2. TEMPORARY PROVISION--POWERS AND DUTIES.--

17 A. The semiquincentennial commission may cooperate  
18 with the United States semiquincentennial commission created by  
19 Public Law 114-196, other national and state organizations  
20 engaged in commemoration and celebration of the United States  
21 semiquincentennial and other national, regional, state and  
22 local public and private organizations having compatible  
23 purposes.

24 B. The commission shall promote and encourage as  
25 part of its celebratory events, electronic media, printed

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1 media, symposia and educational outreach:

2 (1) awareness and understanding of the  
3 principles of the declaration of independence, the United  
4 States' winning of the Revolutionary War and the establishment  
5 of the United States' system of constitutional self-government;

6 (2) the advancement of the cause of liberty  
7 and American self-government through promoting civic knowledge  
8 and practice and the constitutional features of self-government  
9 that emphasize the roles of active and engaged citizens; and

10 (3) an increase in public knowledge and  
11 appreciation of the breadth of American history and the long  
12 quest to live up to the ideals put forth in the declaration of  
13 independence and the United States constitution.

14 C. The commission may:

15 (1) designate advisory and honorary boards and  
16 special committees to assist with planning, developing and  
17 coordinating specific activities;

18 (2) enter into contracts and accept donations,  
19 gifts, grants and other things of value, including real or  
20 personal property and personal services; and

21 (3) do other things consistent with the  
22 purposes of this act to carry out the provisions of this act.

23 SECTION 3. TEMPORARY PROVISION--COOPERATION.--

24 A. The semiquincentennial commission shall consult,  
25 cooperate with and seek advice from appropriate state

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1 departments and agencies, public schools, post-secondary  
2 educational institutions, local public bodies, learned  
3 societies and historical, patriotic, philanthropic, civic,  
4 professional and related organizations.

5 B. The president of each state university shall  
6 cooperate with the commission, especially in the encouragement,  
7 coordination and publicity of scholarly works and presentations  
8 on the history, culture, political thought and commemoration of  
9 the semiquincentennial celebration.

10 SECTION 4. TEMPORARY PROVISION--REPORT.--

11 A. The semiquincentennial commission shall submit  
12 to the governor a report incorporating specific recommendations  
13 for the ceremonial, educational and scholastic commemoration of  
14 the United States semiquincentennial in the state by December  
15 31, 2024. The report shall recommend activities such as:

16 (1) the production, publication and  
17 distribution of books, pamphlets, films and other educational  
18 materials about the semiquincentennial;

19 (2) bibliographical and documentary projects  
20 and publications;

21 (3) conferences, convocations, lectures,  
22 seminars and other programs;

23 (4) the development of special projects for  
24 libraries, museums, state parks and historic sites, including  
25 special exhibits and traveling exhibits;

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1 (5) ceremonies and celebrations commemorating  
2 specific and general events;

3 (6) programs and activities on the national  
4 and international significance of the semiquincentennial and  
5 its implications for present and future generations; and

6 (7) the involvement of local governments and  
7 cultural, historical and other organizations.

8 B. The report shall include recommendations for the  
9 allocation of financial and administrative responsibility among  
10 public and private authorities, a list of organizations  
11 recommended for participation by the commission and proposals  
12 for legislation or administrative action necessary to carry out  
13 the recommendations of the commission.

14 SECTION 5. APPROPRIATION.--Two hundred fifty thousand  
15 dollars (\$250,000) is appropriated from the general fund to the  
16 cultural affairs department for expenditure in fiscal years  
17 2024 through 2027 for the expenses of the semiquincentennial  
18 commission. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining  
19 at the end of fiscal year 2027 shall revert to the general  
20 fund.