
OHIO HISTORY CONNECTION

- Establishes the Ohio Commission for the United States Semiquincentennial consisting of 24 appointed members and 13 ex officio, nonvoting members.
- Specifies the duty of the Commission is to plan, encourage, develop, and coordinate the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States in 2026 and the impact of Ohioans on the nation's past, present, and future.
- Requires the Commission to submit to the Governor and the General Assembly a comprehensive report that includes specific recommendations for the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, and also to submit annual reports.
- Permits the chairperson of the Commission to appoint an executive director and other personnel as necessary.
- Terminates the Commission on July 31, 2026.

Ohio Commission for the United States Semiquincentennial

(R.C. 149.309)

The bill establishes the Ohio Commission for the United States Semiquincentennial for the purpose of planning the commemoration of the 250th anniversary in 2026 of the founding of the United States, as well as Ohio's role in U.S. history before and after receiving statehood.

The Commission must consist of 24 appointed members and 13 ex officio, nonvoting members. The 24 appointed members are as follows:

- Two members of the Senate;
- Two members of the House;
- Four private citizens appointed by the Governor;
- Four private citizens appointed by the Senate President;
- Four private citizens appointed by the Senate Minority Leader;
- Four private citizens appointed by the Speaker of the House;
- Four private citizens appointed by the House Minority Leader.

The 13 ex officio, nonvoting members are as follows:

- The Secretary of State;
- The Attorney General;
- The Auditor of State;
- The Treasurer of State;

- The President of the Board of Trustees of the Ohio History Connection;
- The Director of Transportation;
- The Superintendent of Public Instruction;
- The Chancellor of Higher Education;
- The Director of Natural Resources;
- The Adjutant General;
- The Chairperson of the Board of the Ohio Arts Council;
- The Director of Public Safety;
- The Superintendent of the Ohio State Highway Patrol.

Each member must serve until the Commission's expiration on July 31, 2026, unless the member no longer holds the office that qualifies them for membership. Vacancies are filled in the same manner as the original appointment. The members of the Commission are not entitled to compensation for service on the commission, except for reimbursement for reasonable travel expenses.

Commission meetings must be held throughout Ohio at times and locations determined by the Chairperson. A majority of the members of the Commission constitute a quorum, but a lesser number may hold hearings subject to the call of the Chairperson.

The chairperson of the Commission may appoint an executive director, as well as any other necessary staff. However, the executive director must be confirmed by an affirmative vote of a majority of the Commission's members.

The Commission must launch and maintain an official website that is open and available for public viewing. The website must include the following:

- The Commission's comprehensive report, which must be prepared no more than three years after the bill's effective date;
- Information regarding gifts received by the Commission; and
- The Commission's annual progress report, including an accounting of its funds and whether the Commission is making progress toward its objective.

As part of its planning process, the Commission must give due consideration to the related plans and programs developed by federal, other state, local, and private groups. Of these groups, the Commission may choose representatives to serve on special committees to plan, develop, and coordinate specific activities. Beyond these considerations, the Commission also must conduct extensive public engagement campaigns throughout Ohio to solicit feedback from all Ohioans for the development of the Commission's plans and overall program. As part of these outreach efforts, the Commission must aim to involve and showcase all counties across Ohio as part of the overall program. The costs associated with these duties, as well as the plans and overall program developed by the Commission, must be recorded by the Commission.

No more than three years after the bill's effective date, the Commission must deliver its comprehensive report to the Governor and the General Assembly. The report must include each of the following:

- A detailed timeline of the Commission's plans and overall program through July 31, 2026;
- The Commission's recommendations for the allocation of financial and administrative responsibility among the public and private authorities and organizations recommended for participation by the Commission;
- The projected number of jobs created through the implementation of the Commission's plan and overall program;
- The projected economic consequences of the implementation of the Commission's plan and overall program;
- The plan for the Ohio pavilion, an exhibition of Ohio's history and culture;
- The plan for improvements, if any, to the infrastructure of the state necessary for the successful delivery of the Commission's plan and overall program;
- Outputs and outcomes against which progress and success of the Commission's plan and overall program can be measured.

The report may include recommendations for legislation that will help the Commission execute its plan and overall program, and must be published on the Commission's official website.

If the Chair of the Commission requests information directly from a state agency, the state agency must provide the requested information to the Commission.

The Commission may accept, use, and dispose of gifts and donations of money, property, or personal services. Information relating to the gifts must be detailed and submitted to the Ohio Ethics Commission (OEC) each quarter and must be available on OEC's official website.

The bill also enables the Commission to procure supplies, services, and property. If the Commission retains any property after its termination, the General Assembly may designate this property to a local government or state agency by act.

In addition to the Commission's comprehensive report, it also must deliver to the Governor and General Assembly a report of its activities, including an accounting of funds received and expended during the year covered by the report, the outputs and outcomes achieved, and whether those achievements meet the Commission's plan and overall program. The report must be available on the Commission's official website.

Finally, the Commission is terminated on July 31, 2026.