



- 15 (2) The importance of HBCUs extends beyond the students they educate, as they  
 16 contribute substantially to economic growth and continually work to improve the economic  
 17 health of the neighborhoods surrounding the campus;
- 18 (3) HBCU planning districts can transform these institutions and surrounding communities  
 19 in numerous ways related to housing, digital infrastructure, small business development,  
 20 environmental upgrades, campus upgrades, economic development, and workforce  
 21 development;
- 22 (4) In these planning districts, city, county, state, and federal governments, as well as  
 23 private and philanthropic interests, can leverage their resources to support innovation,  
 24 technology, and entrepreneurship at HBCUs and modernize their campuses and the  
 25 surrounding communities;
- 26 (5) It is the policy of the General Assembly that the government should create planning  
 27 districts and study best practices to implement this innovative approach through ongoing  
 28 community engagement; and
- 29 (6) A thorough, intensive, and systematic study of state policies and potential legislation  
 30 is necessary and appropriate to facilitate the creation of such planning districts in this state.

31

**SECTION 3.**

32 Chapter 8 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the Department  
 33 of Community Affairs, is amended by adding a new article to read as follows:

34

"ARTICLE 1435 50-8-320.

36 (a) There is created the HBCU Economic Prosperity Planning Commission. The  
 37 commission shall be composed of 11 members to be appointed as follows:

38 (1) Three members shall be appointed by Governor;

- 39 (2) Two members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;  
40 (3) Two members shall be appointed by the President of the Senate;  
41 (4) Two members shall be appointed by the minority leader of the House of  
42 Representatives; and  
43 (5) Two members shall be appointed by the minority leader of the Senate.
- 44 (b) The members of the commission shall be individuals of recognized ability and  
45 achievement with knowledge and experience in matters pertaining to historically black  
46 colleges and universities (HBCUs) and economic and community development. At least  
47 two members of the commission shall be current HBCU presidents, and at least one  
48 member of the commission shall be a member of a community that houses an HBCU.
- 49 (c) All vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term by the original appointing official.  
50 Members shall serve for terms of four years and shall be eligible for successive  
51 appointments by the appointing official. Any member with four consecutive unexcused  
52 absences from regular monthly meetings may be removed from the commission by the  
53 appointing official. Each person appointed to the commission shall be a full-time resident  
54 of Georgia. Any member who ceases to be a full-time resident of this state during the term  
55 of his or her membership shall be removed from the commission and such vacancy shall  
56 be filled by appointment by the Governor. Any member may be removed from office by  
57 the appointing official when the actions or condition of that member are considered to be  
58 good cause for removal.
- 59 (d) The commission shall be assigned to the Department of Community Affairs for  
60 administrative purposes only, as prescribed in Code Section 50-4-3.
- 61 50-8-321.
- 62 (a) The commission shall elect a chairperson, a vice chairperson, and a secretary from  
63 among its members annually, and any member shall be eligible for successive election to  
64 such office by the commission.

65 (b) A quorum for transacting business shall be a majority of the members of the  
66 commission.

67 (c) Members of the commission shall serve without compensation but shall be eligible to  
68 receive reimbursement for mileage and other expenses actually incurred in performance  
69 of their duties in accordance with the rates and standards for reimbursement of state  
70 employees.

71 (d) The commission shall employ an executive director who shall manage the work and  
72 accounts of the commission. The commission may delegate to such executive director the  
73 powers and duties it deems proper in order for the commission to function efficiently and  
74 its planning districts to comply with applicable laws and regulations.

75 (e) The commission shall:

76 (1) Provide oversight, guidance, and leadership for the planning district advisory  
77 committees established pursuant to Code Section 50-8-322;

78 (2) Consult with and advise the Governor and any state department, agency, board,  
79 commission, or authority on matters pertaining to economic and community development  
80 in HBCU planning districts; and

81 (3) Review all funding recommendations made by planning districts prior to granting,  
82 denying, or modifying the expenditure of funds.

83 (f) After receiving the recommendations from each advisory committee as provided for  
84 in paragraph (5) of subsection (b) of Code Section 50-8-322, the commission, in  
85 conjunction with the department, shall define each planning district. The commission and  
86 the department shall base each definition on the recommendations of the applicable  
87 advisory committee and shall prioritize opportunities to enhance each HBCU's educational  
88 offerings and surrounding housing, small business, and economic development. In  
89 defining each district, the commission and the department shall also consider the historical  
90 and cultural attachment each HBCU has to its surrounding community. The commission  
91 and the department may redefine a district from time to time as they deem necessary.

- 92 50-8-322.
- 93 (a)(1) The commission shall establish an advisory committee for each of the following
- 94 planning districts:
- 95 (A) The Albany State University planning district;
- 96 (B) The Atlanta University Center Consortium planning district;
- 97 (C) The Fort Valley State University planning district;
- 98 (D) The Paine College planning district; and
- 99 (E) The Savannah State University planning district.
- 100 (2) The commission shall appoint HBCU presidents or other HBCU leaders, local
- 101 community leaders, and other stakeholders as members of each advisory committee.
- 102 (b) Each advisory committee shall have the following powers and duties:
- 103 (1) To undertake a study of the conditions, needs, issues, and problems related to
- 104 fostering economic and community development in communities within the planning
- 105 district, including, but not limited to, housing, digital infrastructure, small business
- 106 development, environmental upgrades, campus upgrades, and workforce development;
- 107 (2) To review and analyze the laws of the State of Georgia and the United States and
- 108 their impact on economic and community development in communities within the
- 109 planning district;
- 110 (3) To initiate research, execute initiatives, recommend policies, and propose legislation
- 111 to further economic and community development in communities within and surrounding
- 112 the planning district;
- 113 (4) To collect and disseminate information regarding the status of economic and
- 114 community development in communities within the planning district;
- 115 (5) To provide the commission and the department with recommendations on how to
- 116 define such planning district's boundaries;

117 (6) To cooperate with the government of the United States and the governments of other  
118 states in programs relating to economic and community development in communities  
119 within the planning district;

120 (7) To accept public or private grants, including philanthropic funds, devises, and  
121 bequests;

122 (8) To hold public hearings, conduct studies, or take any other action the committee  
123 deems necessary to fulfill its responsibilities;

124 (9) To ensure citizen participation is allowed during planning district advisory committee  
125 meetings and furnish citizens with information concerning any public funds or grants  
126 sought; and

127 (10) To make recommendations to the commission for the expenditure of funds for the  
128 benefit of the planning district.

129 (c) The commission shall be authorized to enter into all contracts or agreements necessary  
130 or incidental to the performance of its duties.

131 (d) All executive departments, agencies, boards, commissions, and authorities shall  
132 cooperate with the commission and the advisory committees in the performance of their  
133 duties.

134 50-8-323.

135 (a) The commission is authorized to solicit and accept donations, contributions, grants,  
136 devises, bequests, gifts of money and property, facilities, or services, with or without  
137 consideration, from any person, firm, or corporation or from any state, county, municipal  
138 corporation, or local government or governing body to enable it to carry out its functions  
139 and purpose.

140 (b) In carrying out the purposes of this article, the commission shall be authorized to  
141 contract with, apply for, and accept gifts, loans, and grants from federal, state, or local

142 governments, public agencies, semipublic agencies, or private organizations, and to expend  
143 such funds for the benefit of each planning district according to its identified priorities.

144 (c) All funds accepted, regardless of source, and expended, regardless of purpose, shall be  
145 accounted for by the executive director and subject to review by the commission and  
146 commissioner.

147 (d) The commission is prohibited from paying or compensating any of its members or any  
148 member of an advisory committee, directly or indirectly, any amount in excess of expenses.

149 50-8-324.

150 On the first Monday after January 1 of each year, the commission shall post electronically  
151 on the Department of Community Affairs internet website an annual report summarizing  
152 the activities, findings, and recommendations of each advisory committee. Such report  
153 shall also be submitted to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the  
154 President of the Senate, the chancellor of the University System of Georgia, and all  
155 members of the House of Representatives and the Senate."

156 **SECTION 4.**

157 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.