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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

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A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- RHODE ISLAND COMMERCE
CORPORATION -- RHODE ISLAND -- IRELAND TRADE COMMISSION

Introduced By: Senators Lawson, and Pearson

Date Introduced: March 01, 2024

Referred To: Senate Commerce

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 42-64 of the General Laws entitled "Rhode Island Commerce
2 Corporation" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **42-64-42. Rhode Island-Ireland trade commission.**

4 (a) There is hereby established the Rhode Island-Ireland trade commission. The
5 commission is advisory and shall consist of seven (7) members to be appointed as follows:

6 (1) Two (2) members who shall be appointed by the president of the senate, shall have
7 knowledge of or current or past involvement in organizations that promote Irish affairs, or shall
8 have interest in the well-being of trade relations between Rhode Island and Ireland; and two (2)
9 members who shall be appointed by the speaker of the house, shall have knowledge of or current
10 or past involvement in organizations that promote Irish affairs, or shall have interest in the well-
11 being of trade relations between Rhode Island and Ireland. The members of the commission
12 appointed by the speaker of the house shall serve for two (2) years or until their successor is
13 appointed, and the members appointed by the president of the senate shall serve for three (3) years
14 or until their successor is appointed, whichever period is later.

15 (2) Three (3) members of the commission shall be appointed by the governor, and shall
16 serve for a term of four (4) years or until their successor is appointed. The members appointed shall
17 include one representative from a public institution of higher education; one representative from
18 the Rhode Island chamber of commerce, or its successor organization; and one public member who

1 shall represent Irish-American communities or interests.

2 (3) All appointments shall be made no later than July 1, 2025. A vacancy in the membership
3 of the commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made.

4 (b) Compensation, meetings.

5 (1) Members of the commission shall serve without compensation; provided, however, the
6 members may be reimbursed for expenses actually incurred in the performance of their duties,
7 within the limit of funds appropriated to the commission or otherwise made available to it for its
8 purposes.

9 (2) The commission shall meet and hold hearings at the places it designates throughout the
10 state.

11 (3) The commission shall elect a chair from among its members. The chair may appoint
12 from among the commission members subcommittees and subcommittee chairs at the chair's
13 discretion.

14 (4) The commission shall keep records of all proceedings which shall be public and open
15 to inspection, shall adopt a seal, and shall exercise and perform the duties prescribed by this section.

16 (5) A majority of the members of the commission shall constitute a quorum for the
17 transaction of the business of the commission.

18 (c) The commission shall provide recommendations and information to the Rhode Island
19 commerce corporation established pursuant to § 42-64-4 and the director of the John H. Chafee
20 Center for International Business to promote, enhance and advance the relationship and trade with
21 Ireland.

22 (d) Role and responsibility. The role and responsibility of the Rhode Island-Ireland trade
23 commission shall be to study, research and advance analyses, proposals and recommendations for:

24 (1) Bilateral trade and investments between Rhode Island and Ireland;

25 (2) Policy issues of mutual interest to Rhode Island and Ireland;

26 (3) Promoting business and academic exchanges between Rhode Island and Ireland;

27 (4) Mutual economic support between Rhode Island and Ireland;

28 (5) Mutual investments in the infrastructure of Rhode Island and Ireland;

29 (6) Helping communities in Ireland and Rhode Island through the creation of educational
30 and economic opportunities; and

31 (7) Such other issues as requested by the Rhode Island commerce corporation.

32 (e) Reports.

33 The commission shall report its findings, results, and recommendations to the governor,
34 the speaker of the house, the president of the senate, and the secretary of commerce with a copy to

1 the director of the John H. Chafee Center for International Business, within one year of its initial
2 organizational meeting and by February 1 of each succeeding year for the activities of the preceding
3 calendar year. The report shall be in writing and include recommendations as deemed appropriate
4 by the commission and shall include a financial statement of all funds received and expended
5 pursuant to the provisions of subsection (f) of this section.

6 (f) Funds.

7 The Rhode Island-Ireland trade commission shall be authorized to raise funds, through
8 direct solicitation or other fundraising events, alone, or with other groups, and accept gifts, grants,
9 and bequests from individuals, corporations, foundations, governmental agencies, and public and
10 private organizations and institutions, to defray the commission's administrative expenses and to
11 achieve its purposes.

12 (g) All meetings of the commission shall comply with the provisions of chapter 46 of title
13 42 ("open meetings").

14 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- RHODE ISLAND COMMERCE
CORPORATION -- RHODE ISLAND -- IRELAND TRADE COMMISSION

1 This act would establish a Rhode Island-Ireland trade commission to advance and promote
2 mutual economic interests between Rhode Island and the Republic of Ireland. The commission
3 would consist of seven (7) members appointed by the governor and general assembly. The
4 commission would provide recommendations to the Rhode Island commerce corporation and the
5 John H. Chaffee Center for International Business for proposals and recommendations in
6 furtherance of advancing trade and investment.

7 This act would take effect upon passage.

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