SENATE, No. 2738

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 18, 2018

Sponsored by:
Senator LORETTA WEINBERG
District 37 (Bergen)
Senator JAMES BEACH
District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Co-Sponsored by:
Senator Bateman

SYNOPSIS
Requires NJ Historical Commission to establish program for commemorations and observance of 250th anniversary of United States; permits commission to enter into public-private partnership agreement in preparation of anniversary; appropriates $500,000.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.
AN ACT concerning the New Jersey Historical Commission

commemorating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the
United States and supplementing Tile 52 of the Revised Statutes
and making an appropriation.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
of New Jersey:

1. a. The New Jersey Historical Commission shall formulate
and implement a program for the observance of the historical
aspects of the 250th anniversary of the independence of the United
States and of the first Constitution of this State, including but not
limited to: historical activities; the creation and publication of
historical documents and studies; cooperation with agencies
responsible for the preservation or restoration of historic sites,
buildings, art, and artifacts; establishing statewide wayfinding
signage for Revolutionary Era sites and markers and establishment
of a State American Revolution visitor center; the arrangement of
appropriate public ceremonies; planning for commemorative events,
supported by a comprehensive marketing and tourism campaign,
from calendar year 2024 through calendar year 2033; and the
dissemination of public information regarding New Jersey’s
involvement in the American Revolution.

b. As part of the implementation of a program in accordance
with subsection a. of this section, P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending
before the Legislature as this bill), the commission may enter into a
contract with a private entity, to be referred to as a public-private
partnership agreement, to coordinate and plan the programs and
observance of the State’s semiquincentennial celebration of the
founding of the United States, and to ensure that the State is
appropriately recognized for its role in the American Revolution. A
private entity will be eligible to enter into the public-private
partnership with the commission if:

(1) it is a tax-exempt nonprofit organization as defined in this
section; and

(2) it is responsible for the maintenance and administration of a
national heritage area dedicated to the history of the American
Revolution as it relates to New Jersey.

Any partnership agreement between the commission and a
private entity shall establish an advisory council to support and
guide the work of the partnership. The advisory council shall have
a leadership council dedicated to fundraising and policy comprised
of business and community leaders with a planning sub-committee
which includes regional representatives from the State’s
Revolutionary War historical sites and heritage partners. In
addition to funds appropriated to the commission or the private
entity related to the commemoration of the semiquincentennial
anniversary of the founding of the United States, the advisory
council shall undertake fundraising efforts and seek out sources of revenue for the partnership’s commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. The advisory council shall also develop collaborative activities with the Division of Parks and Forestry and the Division of Travel and Tourism for the planning and promotion of semiquincentennial programs and activities.

c. Any partnership agreement entered into between the commission and a private entity pursuant to this section, P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) shall expire no later than December 31, 2033.

d. As used in this act:

“Public-private partnership agreement” means an agreement entered into by the New Jersey Historical Commission and a private entity pursuant to subsection b. of this section, P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

“Tax-exempt nonprofit organization” means a nonprofit organization that is exempt from federal taxation pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the federal Internal Code, 26 U.S.C. s.501(c)(3).

2. Beginning in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019 and ending in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2028, there shall be appropriated from the General Fund on an annual basis $500,000, $200,000 of which is to be dedicated to the New Jersey Historical Commission for the purpose of supporting semiquincentennial programs and staffing, and $300,000 of which is to be dedicated to the private entity that enters into the public-private partnership agreement with the commission to make statewide upgrades to historical sites, for staffing, and for efforts to undertake significant capital improvements, in accordance with section 1 of P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill would require the New Jersey Historical Commission to formulate and implement a program for the observance of the historical aspects of the 250th anniversary of the independence of the United States and of the first Constitution of this State. As part of that program, the commission may enter into a public-private partnership agreement with a private entity for the planning and undertaking of semiquincentennial programs and activities to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States and New Jersey’s significant role in the American Revolution. New Jersey hosted more battles than any other state
during the revolution, and George Washington spent much of his
time as Commander-in-Chief in the State.

A private entity would be eligible to enter into a public-private
partnership agreement with the commission if it is a tax-exempt
nonprofit organization, and it is responsible for the maintenance and
administration of a national heritage area dedicated to the history of
the American Revolution as it relates to New Jersey. The
agreement would include the creation of an advisory council to
guide the work of the commission and the private entity in the
planning of these celebrations and observations. This agreement
will ensure that New Jersey is adequately recognized for its
historical significance relating to the American Revolution.

To effectuate the purposes of this bill, $500,000 would be
appropriated annually from the General Fund beginning in the fiscal
year ending June 30, 2019.