

## **Kansas Semiquincentennial Commission; HB 2712**

**HB 2712** establishes the Kansas Commission for the United States Semiquincentennial Act (Act).

[*Note:* The U.S. Semiquincentennial, on July 4, 2026, will commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the country.]

### ***Definitions (Section 1)***

The bill defines “act” to mean the Act and “commission” to mean the Kansas Commission for the United States Semiquincentennial (Commission).

### ***Kansas Commission for the United States Semiquincentennial (Section 2)***

The bill establishes the Commission within and as a part of the Department of Commerce (Department) in order to plan, encourage, develop, and coordinate the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States and to recognize the impact of this event on the people of Kansas and the nation’s past, present, and future.

The bill requires the Commission to cooperate with the United States Semiquincentennial Commission (U.S. Commission) and various state agencies, boards, commissions, departments, and political subdivisions in order to execute commemorative events and implement education activities, events, and celebrations related to the semiquincentennial of the United States.

### ***Commission Members (Section 3)***

The bill designates the 20 voting members of the Commission including:

- The Secretary of Commerce or designee;
- The Executive Director of the Kansas African American Affairs Commission or designee;
- The Executive Director of the Kansas Hispanic and Latino American Affairs Commission or designee;
- The Executive Director of the Kansas State Historical Society or designee;
- Three members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the House Majority Leader, and the House Minority Leader, respectively;

- Three members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate, the Senator Majority Leader, and the Senate Minority Leader, respectively;
- The State Regent of the Kansas Society Daughters of the American Revolution or designee;
- The President of the Kansas Society Sons of the American Revolution or designee;
- The President of the Kansas Historical Foundation or designee;
- One professor of American history from a Kansas institution of higher education appointed by the President of the State Board of Regents;
- One teacher of American history from a public school appointed by the State Board of Education;
- One representative appointed by the Kansas Native American Affairs Office;
- The Commander of the Kansas American Legion or designee;
- The Commander of the Kansas Veterans of Foreign Wars or designee;
- The President of the Sunflower Sampler Foundation or designee; and
- The Chairperson of the Kansas State Fair Board or designee.

The bill authorizes Commission members to be appointed for the duration of the Commission, but members will serve only for as long as such members remain in the position that originally qualified the member for appointment.

The bill provides that a vacancy on the Commission will not affect the powers of the Commission and each vacancy will be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

***Commission Purpose (Section 4)***

The bill requires the Commission to plan, coordinate, and implement a program in 2026 to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. In developing the plans and overall program for the event, the Commission will:

- Give due consideration to related plans and programs developed by federal, state, local, and private groups;
- Hold public meetings to solicit the input of Kansas citizens throughout the state in developing programs:

- The first public meeting will be held within 90 days of the Commission's first meeting. Public meetings will continue throughout the Commission's existence;
- Showcase all counties of the state;
- Draw attention to the achievements, struggles, honors, innovations, and impacts of all people in the state;
- Clearly delineate all expenses incurred by the Commission in developing the program;
- Create a website to communicate plans for the semiquincentennial; and
- Solicit gifts and donations from private industry, corporations, and individuals to support the Commission's goals.

The bill allows the Commission to designate special committees with representatives from the U.S. Commission and various state agencies, boards, commissions, departments, and political subdivisions to plan, develop, and coordinate specific activities.

#### ***Meetings of the Commission (Section 5)***

Meetings of the Commission will be held throughout the state at times and locations determined by the Chairperson. The Chairperson will be selected by a majority vote of the Commission and may serve up to two consecutive two-year terms.

The first meeting of the Commission will be called by the State Regent of the Kansas Society Daughters of the American Revolution, or the State Regent's designee. The bill allows the Commission to meet in another manner where all participants can participate with each other at the same time, including an electronic platform, in the case of a national, state, or local emergency that makes meeting in person dangerous or impossible.

#### ***Reports (Section 6)***

The bill requires the Commission to submit a comprehensive report of specific recommendations for the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States to the Governor, Secretary of Commerce, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House on or before December 31, 2022. The report needs to be made publicly available on the Commission's website. The report is required to include:

- A detailed timeline of the Commission's plan for the overall program through 2027;

- The Commission's recommendations for the allocation of costs among public and private entities that provide financial and administrative assistance to the Commission;
- The projected number of jobs created through the implementation of the Commission's plan and overall program;
- The projected economic impact of the implementation of the Commission's plan and overall program on the economy of Kansas;
- The geographic impact of the Commission's plan and overall program on all the counties of Kansas; and
- Outputs and outcomes against which progress and success of the Commission's plan and overall program can be measured.

The bill also requires the Commission to submit an annual report detailing the Commission's activities to the Governor, Secretary of Commerce, Speaker of the House, and President of the Senate on or before December 31, 2023, and by December 31 each year thereafter. The annual report must include an accounting of funds received and expended during the year covered in the report, outputs and outcomes achieved, and whether those achievements meet the Commission's plan and overall program goals. The comprehensive report must be made available to the public on the Commission's website.

### ***Commission Funding (Section 7)***

The bill allows the Commission to accept, use, and dispose of gifts and donations of money, property, or personal services. The type and quantity of gifts must be enumerated and submitted each quarter to the Governmental Ethics Commission and will be made available on the Commission's website.

The bill establishes the Kansas Commission for the United States Semiquincentennial Gifts and Donations Fund (Fund) in the State Treasury, which will be administered by the Secretary of Commerce. The bill requires all expenditures from the Fund to be used for promoting the Commission and made in accordance with appropriations acts approved by the Director of Accounts and Reports issued pursuant to vouchers approved by the Secretary of Commerce or the Secretary's designee.

The bill requires the Director of Accounts and Reports to transfer all moneys and liabilities in the Fund to the operating expenditures account of the Economic Development Initiatives Fund (Department of Commerce) on December 31, 2027. On December 31, 2027, the Fund will be abolished.

### ***Other Provisions (Sections 8-10)***

Upon approval by the majority vote of the Commission, the bill would allow the Commission to:

- Procure supplies, services, and property;
- Enter into contracts;
- Expend funds donated or received pursuant to contracts entered into under the Act from the Fund; and
- Take action as necessary to enable the Commission to effectuate the purposes of the Act.

The bill establishes that Commission members will not receive compensation for work with the Commission and non-legislative citizen members of the Commission will not receive compensation, subsistence allowances, mileage, or reimbursement for expenses incurred during the performance of their Commission duties.

The bill establishes a December 31, 2027, sunset date for the Act. Upon the sunset of the Commission, any remaining property in possession of the Commission will be donated to local municipalities or other state agencies by the Secretary of Commerce.