

The Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism offered the following substitute to SB 235:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 2 of Chapter 3 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,  
2 relating to the board of regents and university system, so as to create the HBCU Innovation  
3 and Economic Prosperity Planning Districts Commission; to provide for membership and  
4 operation; to provide for an executive director; to provide for advisory committees; to  
5 provide for powers and duties; to authorize the commission to accept funding from public  
6 or private grants, devises, and bequests; to provide for reporting; to provide for related  
7 matters; to provide for a short title; to provide for legislative findings; to repeal conflicting  
8 laws; and for other purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

10 **SECTION 1.**

11 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "HBCU Innovation and Economic  
12 Prosperity Planning Districts Act."

13 **SECTION 2.**

14 The General Assembly finds that:

15 (1) From their inception, historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) have served  
16 as anchor institutions in their communities;

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

33

**SECTION 3.**

34 Article 2 of Chapter 3 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the  
35 Board of Regents and University System, is amended by adding a new part to read as  
36 follows:

37 "Part 4

38 20-3-100.

39 (a) There is created the HBCU Innovation and Economic Prosperity Planning Districts  
40 Commission. The commission shall be composed of 11 members to be appointed as  
41 follows:

42 (1) The Governor shall appoint three members, one of whom shall be a current  
43 historically black college and university (HBCU) president;

44 (2) The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint two members, one of  
45 whom shall be a member of a community that houses an HBCU;

46 (3) The President of the Senate shall appoint two members, one of whom shall be a  
47 current HBCU president;

48 (4) The minority leader of the House of Representatives shall appoint two members; and

49 (5) The minority leader of the Senate shall appoint two members.

50 (b) The members of the commission shall be individuals of recognized ability and  
51 achievement with knowledge and experience in matters pertaining to HBCUs and  
52 economic and community development.

53 (c) All vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term by the original appointing official.  
54 Members shall serve for terms of four years and shall be eligible for successive  
55 appointments by the appointing official. Any member with four consecutive unexcused  
56 absences from regular monthly meetings may be removed from the commission by the  
57 appointing official. Each person appointed to the commission shall be a full-time resident  
58 of Georgia. Any member who ceases to be a full-time resident of this state during the term  
59 of his or her membership shall be removed from the commission and such vacancy shall  
60 be filled by appointment by the Governor. Any member may be removed from office by  
61 the appointing official when the actions or condition of that member are considered to be  
62 good cause for removal.

63 (d) The commission shall be assigned to the university system for administrative purposes  
64 only, as prescribed in Code Section 50-4-3. Reserved.

65 20-3-101.

66 (a) The commission shall elect a chairperson, a vice chairperson, and a secretary from  
67 among its members annually, and any member shall be eligible for successive election to  
68 such office by the commission.

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

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

75 (d) The commission shall employ an executive director who shall manage the work of the  
76 commission. The commission may delegate to such executive director the powers and  
77 duties it deems proper.

78 (e) The commission shall provide oversight, guidance, and leadership for the planning  
79 district advisory committees established pursuant to Code Section 20-3-102.

80 20-3-102.

81 (a)(1) The commission shall establish an advisory committee for each of the following  
82 planning districts:

83 (A) The Albany State University planning district;

84 (B) The Atlanta University Center Consortium planning district;

85 (C) The Fort Valley State University planning district;

86 (D) The Paine College planning district; and

87 (E) The Savannah State University planning district.

- 88 (2) The commission shall appoint HBCU presidents or other HBCU leaders, local  
89 community leaders, and other stakeholders as members of each advisory committee.
- 90 (b) Each advisory committee shall have the following powers and duties:
- 91 (1) To undertake a study of the conditions, needs, issues, and problems related to  
92 fostering economic and community development in communities surrounding the  
93 planning district;
- 94 (2) To review and analyze the laws of the State of Georgia and the United States and  
95 their impact on economic and community development in communities surrounding the  
96 planning district;
- 97 (3) To initiate research, execute initiatives, recommend policies, and propose legislation  
98 to further economic and community development in communities surrounding the  
99 planning district;
- 100 (4) To collect and disseminate information regarding the status of economic and  
101 community development in communities surrounding the planning district;
- 102 (5) To consult with and advise the Governor and any state department, agency, board,  
103 commission, or authority on matters pertaining to economic and community development  
104 in communities surrounding the planning district;
- 105 (6) To cooperate with the government of the United States and the governments of other  
106 states in programs relating to economic and community development in communities  
107 surrounding the planning district;
- 108 (7) To accept public or private grants, including philanthropic funds, devises, and  
109 bequests; and
- 110 (8) To hold public hearings, conduct studies, or take any other action the committee  
111 deems necessary to fulfill its responsibilities.
- 112 (c) The commission shall be authorized to enter into all contracts or agreements necessary  
113 or incidental to the performance of its duties.

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

117 20-3-103.

118 The commission is authorized to solicit and accept donations, contributions, grants,  
119 devises, bequests, gifts of money and property, facilities, or services, with or without  
120 consideration, from any person, firm, or corporation or from any state, county, municipal  
121 corporation, or local government or governing body to enable it to carry out its functions  
122 and purpose. The commission is prohibited from paying or compensating any member of  
123 the General Assembly, directly or indirectly, any amount in excess of expenses.

124 20-3-104.

125 On the first Monday after January 1 of each year, the commission shall post electronically  
126 on the university system internet website an annual report summarizing the activities,  
127 findings, and recommendations of each advisory committee. Such report shall also be  
128 submitted to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of  
129 the Senate, and all members of the House of Representatives and the Senate."

130

#### **SECTION 4.**

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