



State of Tennessee

PUBLIC CHAPTER NO. 966

HOUSE BILL NO. 2624

By Representatives Turner, Goins, Rudd, Hardaway, Favors, Parkinson, Camper, Coley

Substituted for: Senate Bill No. 2631

By Senators Norris, Crowe, Gresham, Harper, Jackson, Massey, Tate, Yarbro

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 3; Title 4 and Title 62, relative to boards and commissions.

WHEREAS, in enacting the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crimes Reauthorization Act of 2016 (Public Law No. 114-325), Congress expressed its sense that all authorities with jurisdiction over unsolved civil rights crimes should meet regularly with civil rights organizations, institutions of higher education, and department of justice-designated entities to coordinate information sharing and discuss the status of work in this area; and

WHEREAS, an article in *Politico* noted, "Almost all of the civil rights cold cases that have been resolved in the last forty (40) years owe that resolution to the efforts of reporters, investigative journalists, and local prosecutors"; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee is in need of a central repository to gather, store, refer, and coordinate efforts presently ongoing in the private sector and institutions of higher education; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 3, is amended by adding the following as a new chapter:

3-19-101.

(a) On the effective date of this act, there is created the "Tennessee Civil Rights Crimes Information, Reconciliation, and Research Center" within the office of minority affairs created by Senate Joint Resolution No. 61 of the Public Acts of 1981.

(b) The Tennessee Civil Rights Crimes Information, Reconciliation, and Research Center shall serve as a civil rights crimes remembrance and reconciliation repository, function as an informational clearinghouse on unsolved civil rights crimes and cold cases in this state, and coordinate volunteer activities throughout the state pertinent to the mission and duties of the center.

(c) The staff of the office of minority affairs shall also serve as staff for the Tennessee Civil Rights Crimes Information, Reconciliation, and Research Center. The duties of the center shall include:

(1)

(A) Conducting a statewide survey of civil rights crimes in Tennessee, both solved and unsolved, by utilizing available volunteer resources. In designating volunteers and volunteer coordinators to conduct the survey, the director shall utilize the services of public and private sector institutions, including, but not limited to, the various Tennessee schools of law, universities and colleges, including the historically black universities and colleges such as Lemoyne-Owen, Lane, Fisk, Meharry, and Tennessee State, as well as private sector groups such as Tennesseans for Historical Justice.

(B) The director shall have the authority to design and distribute the survey to the volunteer coordinators to ensure to the extent possible

that the results will be uniform from county to county, designate volunteers and volunteer coordinators in participating geographic areas, act as a central coordinator to prevent duplicative and inconsistent results, catalogue and compile the results of the survey, and transmit the results of the survey in the report required by subdivision (c)(9);

(2) Determining if any information submitted in the survey described in subdivision (c)(1), or by any other method the director acquires information, may still be subject to possible criminal prosecution and transferring any such information to the appropriate state and local law enforcement agencies, district attorneys general, and federal United States attorneys general with jurisdiction for the locations involved;

(3) Communicating, discussing, and meeting with the department of justice as suggested by Congress in the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crimes Reauthorization Act of 2016 to coordinate activities surrounding unsolved civil rights crimes and cold cases believed to have occurred in this state;

(4) Collecting and maintaining, within the center, pertinent information on pending conferences, workshops, public hearings, remembrance and reconciliation events, information on the ten (10) Tennessee stops on the new Civil Rights Trail, information on the activities surrounding the fiftieth anniversary of the Dr. Martin Luther King assassination, and other meetings concerning unsolved civil rights crimes and cold cases occurring in this state;

(5) Coordinating with the state archivist to determine if any material, information, report, or other document received by the Tennessee Civil Rights Crimes Information, Reconciliation, and Research Center is of historical significance and possesses the indicia of authenticity necessary to consider its transfer to the state library and archives for permanent display and storage;

(6) Assisting the public and federal, state, and local government entities with inquiries regarding information on unsolved civil rights crimes and cold cases in this state;

(7) Initiating and participating in any reconciliation actions, meetings, ceremonies, services, and other similar activities on behalf of the state of Tennessee;

(8) Researching, seeking, and applying for any available funding or grants from the federal government or the private sector awarded for any of the purposes of the Tennessee Civil Rights Crimes Information, Reconciliation, and Research Center; and

(9) Submitting a report by January 30th, 2019, and each January 30th thereafter, to the speaker of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives, the senate judiciary committee, and the house of representatives criminal justice committee of the general assembly detailing the activities of the Tennessee Civil Rights Crimes Information, Reconciliation, and Research Center since the effective date of this act.

3-19-102.

(a) The Tennessee Civil Rights Crimes Information, Reconciliation, and Research Center shall obtain and operate a website and a toll-free telephone line for the express purpose of receiving information related to unsolved civil right crimes and cold cases in this state.

(b) The Center shall regularly undertake appropriate activities to inform and remind the citizens of this state of the services provided by the Center and of the availability of the website and toll-free telephone line. Such promotional activities shall regularly include, but not necessarily be limited to, press releases, posters, speeches, and public service announcements on radio and television. The Center shall undertake special activities to improve public awareness of the Center within those counties and

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areas of the state with the highest numbers of unsolved civil rights crimes and cold cases based upon available information.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.

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PASSED: April 24, 2018

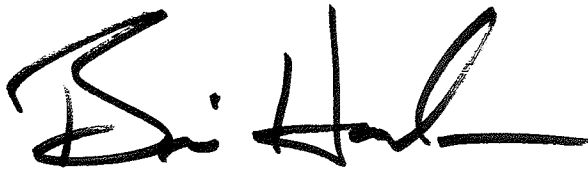


BETH HARWELL, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



RANDY MCNALLY
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

APPROVED this 15th day of May 2018



BILL HASLAM, GOVERNOR