
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 5008

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT-PUERTO RICO TRADE COMMISSION.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes a 23-member Connecticut-Puerto Rico Trade Commission within the Legislative Department to do the following between Connecticut and Puerto Rico:

1. advance bilateral trade and investment,
2. initiate joint action on policy issues of mutual interest,
3. promote business and academic exchanges,
4. encourage mutual economic support and infrastructure investment, and
5. address other issues the commission determines.

To carry out its duties, the bill also authorizes the commission to (1) obtain necessary assistance and data from any executive department, board, commission, or agency in the state; (2) perform necessary and appropriate acts; and (3) accept gifts, donations, or bequests.

The bill requires the commission, starting by February 1, 2027, to annually report to the governor, Department of Economic and Community Development, and Commerce Committee on its activities during the prior year. At a minimum, the report must include recommendations for policy and legislative changes needed to carry out its duties.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

MEMBERSHIP AND MEETINGS

Members

Under the bill, the commission includes the following 23 appointed members:

1. two members each appointed by the six top legislative leaders;
2. two Commerce Committee members, one each appointed by the committee chairpersons;
3. two Commerce Committee ranking members, or their designees;
4. three members appointed by the governor;
5. one representative of a Connecticut public college or university, appointed by the governor;
6. one Connecticut chamber of commerce representative, appointed by the governor; and
7. two representatives of Puerto Rican or Puerto Rican-American communities in the state from different political parties, appointed by the governor.

Under the bill, commission members must be (1) currently or formerly involved in organizations promoting Puerto Rican affairs or (2) interested in trade relations between Connecticut and Puerto Rico.

Appointments

The bill requires appointing authorities to make their initial appointments by October 1, 2025, and fill any vacancies. Those occurring other than by term expiration must be filled for the unexpired term balance.

All members, except those appointed by the governor, may be legislators.

Terms

Under the bill, members generally serve four-year terms, until their

successors are appointed, except as follows:

1. initial gubernatorial and House majority and minority leader appointments terminate on September 30, 2028;
2. initial House speaker, Senate president pro tempore, and Senate majority and minority leader appointments terminate on September 30, 2029; and
3. initial and subsequent Commerce Committee chairperson appointments are coterminous with appointing committee chairperson.

Under the bill, members serve without compensation but are reimbursed, within available funds, for necessary expenses incurred performing their duties.

Leadership and Meetings

The bill requires the House speaker and Senate president pro tempore to select the commission's chairpersons from among its members. The chairpersons must schedule and hold the commission's first meeting by November 1, 2025.

Under the bill, the commission may meet as often as the chairpersons or a majority of the commission members deem necessary. Members who miss three consecutive meetings or 50% of the meetings in a calendar year are deemed to have resigned. A majority of members is a quorum for conducting business.

The bill requires the chairperson of the general assembly's Black and Puerto Rican caucus, in consultation with the Office of Legislative Management, to appoint administrative staff to serve in this capacity for the commission.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Commerce Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 20 Nay 0 (03/18/2025)