

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4087

By Delegate Hornby

[Introduced January 14, 2026; referred to the
Committee on Education then Finance]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §29-36-2, §29-36-4, and §29-36-6 of the Code of West Virginia,
2 1931, as amended, all relating to establishing the West Virginia-Ireland Education Alliance
3 Partnership with the goal of the West Virginia-Ireland Education Alliance Partnership is to
4 strengthen academic, cultural, and workforce connections between West Virginia and
5 Ireland, while creating opportunities for shared learning and international engagement;
6 providing that the West Virginia-Ireland Education Alliance Partnership consist of
7 partnering institutions between West Virginia and Ireland with five members from four-year
8 universities and five members from two-year colleges; and providing for the distribution of
9 five \$50,000 grants between four-year and two-year institutions.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

**ARTICLE 36. WEST VIRGINIA-IRELAND TRADE COMMISSION AND WEST
VIRGINIA-IRELAND EDUCATION ALLIANCE.**

**§29-36-2. Establishment of commission; Composition; Appointments; Vacancies;
Establishment of the West Virginia-Ireland Education Alliance Partnership.**

1 (a) For these and other reasons, there is hereby established the West Virginia-Ireland
2 Trade Commission. The commission shall consist of 9 members, to be appointed as follows:

3 ~~(a)~~ (1) Two members of the Senate, who shall be appointed by the President of the Senate,
4 shall have knowledge of or current or past involvement in organizations that promote Irish affairs,
5 or shall have interest in the well-being of trade relations between West Virginia and Ireland; and
6 two members of the House of Delegates, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of
7 Delegates, shall have knowledge of or current or past involvement in organizations that promote
8 Irish affairs, or shall have interest in the well-being of trade and education relations between West
9 Virginia and Ireland. The legislative members of the commission shall serve during the two-year
10 legislative term in which the appointments are made.

11 ~~(b)~~ (2) Five members of the commission shall be appointed by the Governor, with the

advice and consent of the Senate, and shall serve for a term of four years. The members thus appointed shall include at least one representative from: a public institution of higher education; the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce, or its successor organization; and at least two public members shall represent Irish American communities or interest, neither of whom shall be members of the same political party.

~~(e) (3)~~ All appointments shall be made no later than July 1, 2023. A vacancy in the membership of the commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made.

(b) There is hereby established the West Virginia-Ireland Education Alliance Partnership. The Education Alliance Partnership shall consist of partnering institutions between West Virginia and Ireland, to be appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, and shall serve for a term of four years as follows:

(1) Five members of four-year universities and

(2) Five members of two-year colleges.

(c) The goal of the West Virginia-Ireland Education Alliance Partnership is to strengthen academic, cultural, and workforce connections between West Virginia and Ireland, while creating opportunities for shared learning and international engagement.

(d) A four-year program and two-year program may collaborate with one another to be eligible for one of five \$50,000 grants, as further set forth in §29-36-6 of this code.

§29-36-4. Purpose of Commission and West Virginia–Ireland Education Alliance.

(a) The purpose of the West Virginia-Ireland Trade Commission shall be to:

(1) Advance bilateral trade and investment between West Virginia and Ireland;

(2) Initiate joint action on policy issues of mutual interest to West Virginia and Ireland;

(3) Promote business and academic exchanges between West Virginia and Ireland;

(4) Encourage mutual economic support between West Virginia and Ireland;

(5) Encourage mutual investment in the infrastructure of West Virginia and Ireland; and

(6) Address such other issues as determined by the Commission; and

(b) The purpose of the West Virginia–Ireland Education Alliance is to:

(1) Establish a West Virginia–Ireland Education Alliance to strengthen academic, cultural, and workforce connections between West Virginia and Ireland, creating opportunities for shared learning and international engagement.

§29-36-6.

Funds.

(a) The West Virginia-Ireland Trade Commission shall be authorized to raise funds, through direct solicitation or other fundraising events, alone, or with other groups, and accept gifts, grants, and bequests from individuals, corporations, foundations, governmental agencies, and public and private organizations and institutions, to defray the commission's administrative expenses and to carry out its purposes.

(b) Each partnership of the West Virginia–Ireland Education Alliance shall receive \$50,000 in funding to support student and faculty exchange programs and collaborative educational initiatives. The total amount of the grant funding shall be \$250,000, to be distributed in \$50,000 increments between a four-year and a two-year program, in partnership with one another. The Higher Education Policy Commission shall decide which four-year and two-year programs are eligible for one of the five \$50,000 grants.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to establish the West Virginia-Ireland Education Alliance Partnership with the goal of the West Virginia-Ireland Education Alliance Partnership is to strengthen academic, cultural, and workforce connections between West Virginia and Ireland,

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.