

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Committee Substitute

for

House Bill 4087

By Delegates Hornby, Willis, G. Howell, and Linville

[Originating in the Committee on Education; Reported
on January 19, 2026]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §29-36-2, and §29-36-4 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as
2 amended, all relating to establishing the West Virginia-Ireland Education Alliance;
3 expanding West Virginia-Ireland Trade Commission membership to include an interest in
4 education; providing for partnerships between West Virginia higher education institutions
5 and Ireland higher education institutions; requiring a state four-year higher education
6 institution and a state two-year higher education institution to collaborate to be eligible for
7 grant funding; providing that the Higher Education Policy Commission shall determine
8 which higher education institutions may receive grant funding; stating a purpose for the
9 West Virginia-Ireland Education Alliance, and making technical changes.

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.**

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 education and the well-being of trade relations between West Virginia and
6 Ireland; and two members of the House of Delegates, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of
7 the House of Delegates, shall have knowledge of or current or past involvement in organizations
8 that promote Irish affairs, or shall have interest in education and the well-being of trade relations
9 between West Virginia and Ireland. The legislative members of the commission shall serve during
10 the two-year 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.

~~(c) (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 which shall partner West Virginia higher education institutions with Ireland higher education institutions to support student and faculty exchange programs and collaborative educational initiatives.

(1) Under the West Virginia-Ireland Education Alliance, a state four-year higher education institution and a state two-year higher education institution shall partner with one another to be eligible for a grant of up to \$50,000, subject to appropriation by the Legislature.

(2) The Higher Education Policy Commission shall determine which partnered state four-year and two-year higher education institutions are eligible for one of the grants.

§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.

(b) The purpose of the West Virginia-Ireland Education Alliance is to strengthen academic, cultural, and workforce connections between West Virginia and Ireland, creating opportunities for

- 10 shared learning and international engagement.