General Assembly

Committee Bill No. 5008

January Session, 2025

LCO No. **6442**

Referred to Committee on COMMERCE

Introduced by:
(CE)

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTICUT-PUERTO RICO TRADE COMMISSION.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a Connecticut-Puerto Rico Trade Commission, which shall be part of the Legislative Department.

(b) The commission shall consist of the following members:

(1) Two appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives;

(2) Two appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate;

(3) Two appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives;

(4) Two appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;

(5) Two appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives;

(6) Two appointed by the minority leader of the Senate;

(7) Two members of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to commerce, one of whom shall be appointed by the Senate chairperson of such committee and one of whom shall be appointed by the House chairperson of such committee;

(8) The ranking members of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to commerce, or their designees;

(9) Three persons appointed by the Governor;

(10) A representative of a public institution of higher education in the state, who shall be appointed by the Governor;

(11) A representative of a chamber of commerce in the state, who shall be appointed by the Governor; and

(12) Two representatives of Puerto Rican or Puerto Rican-American communities in the state, who shall be appointed by the Governor and shall not be members of the same political party.

(c) The members of the commission shall each have current or past involvement in organizations that promote Puerto Rican affairs or are interested in the well-being of trade relations between the state and Puerto Rico.

(d) Any member of the commission appointed under subdivisions (1) to (6), inclusive, of subsection (b) of this section may be a member of the General Assembly.

(e) (1) All initial appointments to the commission shall be made not later than October 1, 2025. Initial appointments made by the Governor, the majority leader of the House of Representatives and the minority leader of the House of Representatives shall terminate on September 30, 2028. Initial appointments made by the speaker of the House of

Representatives, the president pro tempore of the Senate, the majority leader of the Senate and the minority leader of the Senate shall terminate on September 30, 2029. The initial and subsequent terms of members appointed by the chairpersons of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to commerce shall be coterminous with the terms of the appointing authority for each such member in accordance with the provisions of section 4-1a of the general statutes.

(2) Appointed members of the commission shall serve for four-year terms which shall commence on the date of appointment, except as provided in subdivision (1) of this subsection. Members shall continue to serve until their successors are appointed.

(f) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the commission from among the members of the commission. Such chairpersons shall schedule the first meeting of the commission, which shall be held not later than November 1, 2025.

(g) The chairperson of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus of the General Assembly, in consultation with the Office of Legislative Management, shall appoint the administrative staff to serve as the administrative staff of the commission.

(h) Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority. Any vacancy occurring other than by expiration of term shall be filled for the balance of the unexpired term.

(i) A majority of the commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business.

(j) The members of the commission shall serve without compensation, but shall, within the limits of available funds, be reimbursed for expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of their duties.

(k) The commission shall have the following powers and duties: (1) To advance bilateral trade and investment between the state and Puerto Rico; (2) to initiate joint action on policy issues of mutual interest to the state and Puerto Rico; (3) to promote business and academic exchanges between the state and Puerto Rico; (4) to encourage mutual economic support between the state and Puerto Rico; (5) to encourage mutual investment in the infrastructure of the state and Puerto Rico; (6) to address such other issues as determined by the commission; (7) to obtain from any executive department, board, commission or other agency of the state such assistance and data as are necessary and available to carry out the purposes of this section; (8) to accept any gift, donation or bequest for the purpose of performing the duties described in this section; and (9) to perform such other acts as may be necessary and appropriate to carry out the duties described in this section.

(l) The commission shall meet as often as deemed necessary by the chairpersons or a majority of the commission. Any appointed member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings or who fails to attend fifty per cent of all meetings held during any calendar year shall be deemed to have resigned from the commission.

(m) Not later than February 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, the commission shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the Governor, the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development and the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to commerce on the activities of the commission during the preceding year, which shall include, but need not be limited to, any recommendations for policy changes and amendments to the general statutes necessary to effectuate the purposes of the commission.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	*from passage*	New section

CE *Joint Favorable*