

Commerce Committee

Tuesday, February 3, 2026
10:30 AM - 1:30 PM
Sumner Hall (404 HOB)

Meeting Packet

Daniel Perez
Speaker

James Buchanan
Chair

Committee Meeting Notice

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Commerce Committee

Start Date and Time:	Tuesday, February 03, 2026 10:30 AM
End Date and Time:	Tuesday, February 03, 2026 01:30 PM
Location:	Sumner Hall (404 HOB)
Duration:	3.00 hrs

Consideration of the following bill(s):

HB 271 Foreign and Alien Bail Bond Insurers by Valdés
CS/HB 805 Veterinary Medicine by Industries & Professional Activities Subcommittee, Melo
HB 893 Trust Fund Interest for Purposes Approved by Supreme Court by Koster
CS/HB 919 Commercial Service Airports by Economic Infrastructure Subcommittee, Weinberger, Kendall
HB 1509 Veterinarian Licensure by Endorsement by Johnson

Consideration of the following proposed committee substitute(s):

PCS for CS/HB 881 -- Pari-Mutuel Wagering

NOTICE FINALIZED on 01/30/2026 4:34PM by Marks.Amie

HB 271

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BILL ANALYSIS

This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

BILL #: HB 271	**COMPANION BILL:** SB 642 (Burgess)
TITLE: Foreign and Alien Bail Bond Insurers	**LINKED BILLS:** None
SPONSOR(S): Valdés	**RELATED BILLS:** None

Committee References

Insurance & Banking
17 Y, 0 N

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Commerce

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:
The bill subjects foreign and alien bail bond insurers transacting in Florida to the current reporting requirements for domestic bail bond insurers.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:
The bill may have an indeterminate fiscal impact on foreign and alien bail bond insurers.

JUMP TO SUMMARY ANALYSIS RELEVANT INFORMATION BILL HISTORY

ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

The bill subjects foreign and alien bail bond insurers doing business in Florida to the current reporting requirements for domestic bail bond insurers. These include:

- reporting direct written premiums for bail bonds minus any amounts retained by licensed bail bond agents or appointed managing general agents;
- establishing that direct written premiums for bail bond insurance may not be reported as less than 6.5% of the total premiums received by agents for all bonds issued;
- applying the same reporting requirements to premiums assumed by foreign and alien bail bond insurers;
- keeping complete and accurate record of the total premiums amounts for all bail bonds written; and
- disclosing the following information within the insurer's annual statement filed with the Office of Insurance Regulation:
  - gross bail bond premiums written in each state by the agents of the insurer;
  - premium taxes incurred by the insurer in each state;
  - total premium withheld by agents and not reported as an expense in the insurer's financial statements; and
  - the amount of bail bond premiums included as surety in the insurer's financial statements. (Section 1)

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2026. (Section 2)

FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

PRIVATE SECTOR:

The bill may have an indeterminate impact on foreign and alien bail bond insurers due to expanded reporting, recordkeeping, and compliance requirements. Under current law, foreign and alien insurers may report lower premiums and, as a result, potentially pay less taxes as compared to domestic bail bond insurers.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Types of Insurers in Florida

The Florida Insurance Code defines three types of insurers. Domestic insurers are insurers that are formed under the laws of Florida.[1] Foreign insurers are insurers formed under the laws of any state, district, territory, or commonwealth of the United States other than Florida.[2] Alien insurers are insurers that are not defined as domestic or foreign insurers.[3]

Active Bail Bond Insurers in Florida

According to Office of Insurance Regulation (OIR), there are 89 insurers who currently hold Certificates of Authority[4] to issue bail bonds. Of these insurers, 15 are considered domestic insurers and 74 are considered foreign insurers.[5]

Annual Statement Reporting Requirements

Authorized insurers in Florida must file annual statements with OIR containing information on their financial condition, transactions, and affairs. The statements must include information typically included on the insurer's financial statements following generally accepted insurance accounting principles and practices (GAAP). Annual statements must be filed by March 1st for the previous calendar year.[6] Each insurer's annual statement filing must include:[7]

- a statement of opinion on loss and loss adjustment expense reserves;
- an actuarial opinion summary;[8] and
- a certificate verifying that the assets required by OIR as a deposit have a market value equal to or in excess of the required deposit.

Domestic bail bond insurers are also required to provide additional information in the notes of their financial statements that comprise their annual report. The insurers must provide:[9]

- the gross bail bond premiums[10] written in each state by agents for the company;
- the amount of premium taxes incurred by the company in each state;
- the total premiums withheld by agents and not reported as an expense in the insurer's financial statements; and
- the amount of bail bond premiums included as surety in the insurer's financial statements.

Under current law, foreign and alien bail bond insurers are required to file an annual statement but are not required to disclose the additional information that domestic bail bond insurers must.

Bail Bond Premiums

When an individual purchases a bail bond, the bail bond agent keeps a portion of the premium earned while the insurer who financially guarantees the full court-ordered bail amount keeps the remainder.[11] Current law states

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[1] S. 624.06(1), F.S.
[2] S. 624.06(2), F.S.
[3] S. 624.06(3), F.S.
[4] "Certificate of Authority" is defined as the regulatory license issued by OIR allowing an insurer to transact insurance in Florida. S. 624.401(1), F.S.
[5] Stubbs, S. (Director of Legislative & Cabinet Affairs, OIR), "RE: Verification of Bail Bond Insurers", November 13, 2025.
[6] S. 624.424(1)(a), F.S.
[7] S. 624.411, F.S.
[8] S. 624.424(1)(b), F.S.
[9] S. 624.4094(4), F.S.
[10] "Gross bail bond premiums" means direct premiums written and reinsurance assumed. *See* s. 624.4095(3), F.S.
[11] *See* s. 624.4094(1), F.S.

that the Legislature recognizes that agents typically retain a significant portion of the bail bond premium, not the insurer.[12]

In the state of Florida, bail bond premium fees are fixed amounts. Premiums are earned in full and considered nonrefundable as soon as a defendant is released from jail. For state bonds, premiums are 10% of the court-ordered bail amount whereas premiums for federal bonds are 15% of the court-ordered bail amount.[13] Bail bonds cannot be executed at a premium rate other than the rate filed and approved by OIR.[14]

Each domestic bail bond insurer is required to keep a complete and accurate record of the total premium amounts paid for all bail bonds written.[15]

Under current law, foreign and alien bail bond insurers are subject to the premium cap, but are not required to record premiums in the same manner as domestic bail bond insurers.

Reporting Direct Written Premiums

Current law requires domestic bail bond insurers to report direct written premiums as the actual amount of premiums they receive from the issuance of the bond. This is the total premium minus what agents retain. Regardless of the premium amount actually collected by the domestic insurer, the direct written premiums reported to OIR cannot be less than 6.5% of the total collected premiums by any agent on the insurer's behalf.[16]

Under current law, foreign and alien bail bond insurers are not subject to these provisions.

Reporting Premiums Assumed

Premiums assumed by a domestic bail bond insurer, either through reinsurance contracts or other risk arrangements, are also reported net of any amounts retained by agents. When reported to OIR, assumed premiums also cannot be less than 6.5% of the total collected premiums by an any agent on the insurer's behalf.[17]

Under current law, foreign and alien bail bond insurers are not subject to these provisions.

Bail Bond Premium Taxes

The tax base for bail bond insurers is the direct written premiums received for all bail bond policies issued in Florida excluding the amount kept by agents. Bail bond insurers owe the Florida Department of Revenue an amount equal to 1.75% of total premiums written in the preceding year, excluding the agent-retained portion, by March 1st each year.[18]

Examples of Premium Reporting and Premium Taxes

Below are examples as to how domestic, foreign, and alien bail bond insurers are required to report their transacted premiums and pay taxes on such premiums under current law.

Domestic Bail Bond Insurers Reporting Premiums Inferior to the 6.5% Minimum Example

An individual purchases a bail bond for $1,000 and the bail bond agent keeps $950 of the $1,000 premium as their service fee. Even though domestic insurers report direct written premiums minus what the agent retained, the $50 actually retained by the domestic insurer does not satisfy the 6.5% minimum. Therefore, the domestic insurer must report at least $65 to OIR as the premium for the bail bond. The domestic insurer would then be taxed $1.14, or 1.75%, for the reported $65 premium.

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[12] S. 624.4094(1), F.S.
[13] Bail Bonds Overview, Florida Department of Financial Services, https://myfloridacfo.com/division/consumers/understanding-insurance/bail-bonds-overview (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).
[14] S. 648.33(2), F.S.
[15] S. 624.4094(3), F.S.
[16] *Id.*
[17] S. 624.4094(2), F.S.
[18] S. 624.509(1)(c), F.S.

Foreign and Alien Bond Insurers Reporting Premiums Example
An individual purchases a bail bond for $1,000 and the bail bond agent keeps $950 of the $1,000 premium as their service fee. Even though the foreign/alien insurer writes a total of $1,000 in premium, the direct written premium may be reported as the $50 the foreign/alien insurer actually retained, as it is not subject to the 6.5% minimum that domestic insurers are. The foreign/alien insurer would then be taxed $0.88, or 1.75%, for the reported $50 premium.

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Insurance & Banking Subcommittee	17 Y, 0 N	1/29/2026	Brackett	Veigle
Commerce Committee			Hamon	Veigle

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to foreign and alien bail bond insurers; amending s. 624.4094, F.S.; providing duties of certain foreign and alien bail bond insurers relating to reporting bail bond premiums to the Office of Insurance Regulation, keeping records of considerations paid for bail bonds written by the insurers, and disclosing certain information in the financial statements filed with the office; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 624.4094, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

624.4094 Bail bond premiums.—

(1) The Legislature finds that a significant portion of bail bond premiums is retained by the licensed bail bond agents or appointed managing general agents. For purposes of reporting in financial statements required to be filed with the office pursuant to s. 624.424, direct written premiums for bail bonds by a domestic, foreign, or alien insurer doing business in this state shall be reported net of any amounts retained by licensed bail bond agents or appointed managing general agents. However, in no case shall the direct written premiums for bail bonds be

CODING: Words stricken are deletions; words underlined are additions.

less than 6.5 percent of the total consideration received by the agent for all bail bonds written by the agent. This subsection also applies to any determination of compliance with s. 624.4095.

(2) Premiums assumed by a domestic, foreign, or alien insurer shall be reported consistent with subsections (1) and (4) for purposes of filing financial statements with the office.

(3) Each domestic, foreign, or alien bail bond insurer shall keep complete and accurate records of the total consideration paid for all bail bonds written by such insurer.

(4) Each domestic, foreign, or alien bail bond insurer shall disclose the following information in the notes to the financial statement in the insurer's annual statement filed with the office.

(a) The gross bail bond premiums written in each state by agents for the company.

(b) The amount of premium taxes incurred by the company in each state.

(c) Total consideration withheld by agents and not reported as an expense by the insurer in financial statements filed with the office.

(d) The amount of bail bond premium included on the surety line of the annual statement filed with the office.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

CODING: Words stricken are deletions; words underlined are additions.

CS/HB 805

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BILL ANALYSIS

This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

BILL #: CS/HB 805	**COMPANION BILL:** CS/SB 796 (Bradley)
TITLE: Veterinary Medicine	**LINKED BILLS:** None
SPONSOR(S): Melo	**RELATED BILLS:** None

Committee References

Industries & Professional Activities
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Commerce

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:
The bill amends Florida's veterinary medical practice act (practice act), creating a new level of veterinary professional ("veterinary professional associate") that must be registered with the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) and is allowed to work under a licensed veterinarian. The bill defines the new position, specifies a formal registration process, and provides authorized duties and prohibitions. The bill also increases the duration of prescriptions based solely on a veterinary telehealth evaluation, allowing up to 6 months for flea and tick medications and up to 30 days for all other medications.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:
The bill may have an indeterminate fiscal impact on state government and a positive fiscal impact on the private sector.

JUMP TO SUMMARY ANALYSIS RELEVANT INFORMATION BILL HISTORY

ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

Veterinary Workforce Innovation Act
The bill names the act the "Veterinary Workforce Innovation Act." (Section 1)

Veterinary Professional Associate
The bill modifies the veterinary medical practice act (practice act), providing that the practice of educated, trained, and experienced veterinary professional associates will increase consumer access to high-quality veterinary medical services at a reasonable cost to consumers, while also increasing the efficiency of the practice of veterinary medicine in this state. (Section 2)

The bill creates a new level of veterinary professional – the veterinary professional associate. The bill defines the veterinary professional associate as an individual who has graduated with a master's degree or the equivalent in veterinary clinical care from an accredited institution and who meets the requirements to be registered. (Section 3)

The bill includes registered veterinary professional associates to the exemption in the practice act that applies when administering medication or rendering auxiliary or supporting assistance under the responsible supervision of a licensed veterinarian. (Section 5)

The bill creates a registration process for an applicant to be registered as a veterinary professional associate. Specifically, the bill authorizes a veterinary professional associate to apply to the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) for registration by submitting a form prescribed by the Board of Veterinary Medicine (Board). In addition, the bill:

- Requires DBPR to consider each qualified veterinary professional associate who has submitted a completed application and meets the applicable requirements.
- Requires DBPR to issue a certificate of registration to each veterinary professional associate who has graduated from the relevant accredited program and received a passing score on the relevant professional national competency examination approved by the Board.
- Requires DBPR to make the list of registrants available to the public on its website.
- Allows DBPR to suspend the registration of any veterinary professional associate who the Board determines has caused serious harm to an animal due to negligence, incompetence, or misconduct related to their duties and in a manner inconsistent with the supervising veterinarian's specific direction until the registrant completes remedial training or education directed by the Board.
- Allows DBPR to rescind the registration of any veterinary professional associate who is convicted of animal cruelty or animal fighting. (Section 6)

The bill prohibits individuals from holding themselves out as a registered veterinary professional associate or in any other way representing himself or herself as a veterinary professional associate unless he or she has a valid certificate of registration from DBPR. (Section 6)

The bill allows, unless otherwise prohibited by federal law, registered veterinary professional associates to engage in the practice of veterinary medicine or veterinary medicine to the extent that he or she is competent and has the necessary training, current knowledge, and experience to provide such care, as delegated under the responsible supervision of a licensed veterinarian. (Section 6)

The bill prohibits registered veterinary professional associates from doing any of the following:

- Prescribing a controlled substance listed in s. 893.03, F.S., except that a registered veterinary professional associate may perform humane euthanasia and prepare, log, and administer controlled substances for the purpose of analgesia, anesthesia, or humane euthanasia, as delegated by a licensed veterinarian and performed under responsible supervision.
- Perform a surgical procedure, except that a veterinary professional associate may perform an orchiectomy,[1] veterinary dental surgery, or veterinary suturing or stapling of skin lacerations, gingival incisions, or existing surgical incisions. (Section 6)

The bill allows a registered veterinary professional associate to administer rabies vaccinations. (Section 7)

Veterinary Telehealth Prescriptions

The bill increases the timeframe for prescriptions via veterinary telehealth from:

- 1 month to 6 months for flea and tick medication; and
- 4 days to 30 days for other animal drugs. (Section 4)

Effective Date

The effective date of the bill is January 1, 2027. (Section 8)

FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

STATE GOVERNMENT:

Indeterminate. Creating and administering the registration program for veterinary professional associates may have an indeterminate fiscal impact on DBPR. It is unknown how many people will apply for a certificate of registration.

[1] This procedure is for reproductive sterilization (spay/neuter). It is used to reduce the incidence of the most common canine prostatic diseases, tumors, and unwanted behaviors. Today's Veterinary Practice, *Update on Orchiectomy*, https://todaysveterinarypractice.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/10/TVP-2022-1112_Orchiectomy.pdf (last visited January 20, 2026).

PRIVATE SECTOR:

Indeterminate. The bill may have in indeterminate positive economic impact on the private sector. The bill will allow a new class of midlevel practitioners in veterinary medicine. This may lead to additional jobs, and cost savings related to improved veterinary care.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Practice of Veterinary Medicine

The Board of Veterinary Medicine (Board) in the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) implements the provisions of ch. 474, F.S., relating to veterinary medical practice (practice act). The purpose of the practice act is to ensure that every veterinarian practicing in this state meets minimum requirements for safe practices to protect public health and safety.[2]

The practice act provides that the practice of veterinary medicine is potentially dangerous to the public health and safety if conducted by incompetent and unlicensed practitioners. The practice act ensures that every veterinarian practicing in this state meet minimum requirements for safe practice. It is the legislative intent that veterinarians who are not normally competent or who otherwise present a danger to the public must be disciplined or prohibited from practicing in this state.[3]

A "veterinarian" is a health care practitioner licensed by the Board to engage in the practice of veterinary medicine in Florida[4] and they are subject to disciplinary action from the Board for various violations of the practice act.[5]

The practice of "veterinary medicine" is the diagnosis of medical conditions of animals, and the prescribing or administering of medicine and treatment to animals for the prevention, cure, or relief of a wound, fracture, bodily injury, or disease, or holding oneself out as performing any of these functions.[6]

Veterinary medicine includes, with respect to animals:[7]

- Surgery;
- Acupuncture;
- Obstetrics;
- Dentistry;
- Physical therapy;
- Radiology;
- Theriogenology (reproductive medicine); and
- Other branches or specialties of veterinary medicine.

The practice act does not apply to the following categories of persons:

- Veterinary aides, nurses, laboratory technicians, preceptors,[8] or other employees of a licensed veterinarian, who administer medication or provide help or support under the responsible supervision[9] of a licensed veterinarian;

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[2] S. 474.201, F.S.
[3] S. 474.201, F.S.
[4] S. 474.202(11), F.S.
[5] Ss. 474.213 & 474.214, F.S.
[6] *See* s. 474.202(9), F.S. Also included is the determination of the health, fitness, or soundness of an animal, and the performance of any manual procedure for the diagnosis or treatment of pregnancy or fertility or infertility of animals.
[7] *See* s. 474.202(13), F.S. Section 474.202(1), F.S., defines "animal" as "any mammal other than a human being or any bird, amphibian, fish, or reptile, wild or domestic, living or dead."
[8] A preceptor is a skilled practitioner or faculty member who directs, teaches, supervises, and evaluates students in a clinical setting to allow practical experience with patients. *See also* https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/preceptor#medicalDictionary (last visited Jan. 29, 2026).

- Certain non-Florida licensed veterinarians who are consulting upon request of a Florida-licensed veterinarian on the treatment of a specific animal or on the treatment on a specific case of the animals of a single owner.
- Faculty veterinarians when they have assigned teaching duties at accredited[10] institutions;
- Certain graduated intern/resident veterinarians of accredited institutions;
- Certain students in a school or college of veterinary medicine who perform assigned duties by an instructor or work as preceptors;
- Certain doctors of veterinary medicine employed by a state agency or the United States Government;
- Persons or their employees caring for the persons' own animals, as well as certain part-time or temporary employees, or independent contractors, who are hired by an owner to help with herd management and animal husbandry tasks; and
- Certain entities or persons[11] that conduct experiments and scientific research on animals as part of the development of pharmaceuticals, biologicals, serums, or methods of treatment or techniques to diagnose or treat human ailments, or in the study and development of methods and techniques applicable to the practice of veterinary medicine.[12]

The practice act defines "immediate supervision" to mean that a "licensed doctor of veterinary medicine is on the premises whenever veterinary services are being provided."[13]

Veterinary tasks requiring immediate supervision, include:[14]

- Administering anesthesia and tranquilization by a veterinary aide, nurse, laboratory technician, intern, or other employee of a licensed veterinarian.
- Administering certain vaccinations by a veterinary aide, nurse, technician, intern or other employee of a licensed veterinarian which is not specifically prohibited.

Veterinary tasks that may be performed without the licensed veterinarian on the premises, include:[15]

- Administering medication and treatment, excluding vaccinations, as directed by the licensed veterinarian; and
- Obtaining samples and the performance of those diagnostic tests, including radiographs, directed by the licensed veterinarian.

Responsible supervision means "the control, direction, and regulation by a licensed doctor of veterinary medicine of the duties involving veterinary services which she or he delegates to unlicensed personnel."[16]

Veterinary Telehealth

In 2024, the Legislature created and passed the Providing Equity in Telehealth Services Act (PETS act), authorizing the practice of veterinary telehealth.[17] The PETS act allows veterinarians who hold current licenses to practice veterinary telehealth.[18]

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[9] The term "responsible supervision" is defined in s. 474.202(10), F.S., as the "control, direction, and regulation by a licensed doctor of veterinary medicine of the duties involving veterinary services" delegated to unlicensed personnel.
[10] S. 474.203(1)-(2), F.S., provide that accreditation of a school or college must be granted by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Council on Education, or the AVMA Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates.
[11] *See* s. 474.203(6), F.S., which states that the exemption applies to "[s]tate agencies, accredited schools, institutions, foundations, business corporations or associations, physicians licensed to practice medicine and surgery in all its branches, graduate doctors of veterinary medicine, or persons under the direct supervision thereof ...."
[12] *See* s. 474.203, F.S.
[13] S. 474.202(5), F.S.
[14] R. 61G18-17.005, F.A.C.
[15] *Id.*
[16] S. 474.202(10), F.S.
[17] Ch. 2024-260, Laws of Fla. (codified at s. 474.2021, F.S., effective July 1, 2024).
[18] *Id.* Florida law requires the practice of telehealth to be consistent with a veterinarian's scope of practice and the prevailing professional standard of practice for a veterinarian who provides in-person veterinary services to patients in Florida, and who

Limitations
The PETS act placed certain limitations on what veterinarians are able to do via telehealth, including:

- Requiring veterinarians to provide certain information to the client, including the veterinarian's name, license number and contact information;
- Requiring veterinarians to prescribe all drugs and medications in accordance with federal and state laws;
- Prohibiting veterinarians from ordering or prescribing medicinal drugs or drugs as defined in s. 465.003, F.S., approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for human use, or compounded antibacterial, antifungal, antiviral, or antiparasitic medications, unless the veterinarian has conducted an in-person physical examination of the animal or made medically appropriate and timely visits within the past year to the premises where the animal is kept;
- Prohibiting the use of veterinary telehealth to prescribe a controlled substance as defined in ch. 893, F.S. (Drug Abuse Preventions and Control), unless the veterinarian has conducted an in-person physical examination of the animal or made medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where the animal is kept;
- Prohibiting prescribing a drug or other medication for use on a horse engaged in racing or training at a facility under the jurisdiction of the Florida Gaming Control Commission or on a horse that is a covered horse, as defined in the federal Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act, 15 U.S.C., ss. 3051 et seq.

Telehealth Prescriptions
Prescriptions based solely on a telehealth evaluation may be issued for up to 1 month for products labeled solely for flea and tick control and up to 14 days of treatment for other animal drugs.[19] Prescriptions based solely on a telehealth evaluation may not be renewed without an in-person examination.[20]

Veterinary Professional Associates

In 2024, voters of the state of Colorado approved a ballot measure to create a new, state-regulated veterinary position (Veterinary Professional Associate) that was to address, in part, the shortage of care, especially in rural areas, for pets.[21] Colorado's proposition directed the creation of a regulatory scheme to license and regulate Veterinary Professional Associates.

Similar to what is being proposed in the bill, Colorado would provide this Veterinary Professional Associate a pathway for those who complete a master's degree in veterinary clinical care, or an equivalent degree determined by the state board.[22] This new Colorado law went into effect on January 1, 2026.[23]

In 2022, The Lincoln Memorial University-College of Veterinary Medicine created the first-of-its-kind Master of Veterinary Clinical Care degree.[24] Students can obtain this degree fully online and in as little as 3 semesters (30 credit hours).[25]

In 2025, Colorado State University developed a similar program that is now admitting students.[26] According to the Colorado State University, College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, "a veterinary professional

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must employ sound, professional judgment to determine whether using veterinary telehealth is an appropriate method for delivering medical advice or treatment to the patient.
[19] Section 474.2021, F.S.
[20] *Id*.
[21] Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies, *State Board of Veterinary Medicine: Proposition 129*, https://dpo.colorado.gov/Veterinary/VeterinaryProfessionalAssociates, (last visited January 13, 2026).
[22] *Id*.
[23] *Id*.
[24] Lincoln Memorial University, *Master of Veterinary Clinical Care*, https://www.lmunet.edu/academics/programs/graduate-professional/master-of-veterinary-clinical-care, (last visited January 13, 2026).
[25] *Id*.
[26] Colorado State University, *About the Master of Science in Veterinary Clinical Care*, https://vetmedbiosci.colostate.edu/vpa/, (last visited January 13, 2026).

associate is a new role similar to a physician assistant in human medicine. This mid-level role fills a gap between veterinarians and veterinary technicians and – along with other institutional initiatives – helps address a national shortage of veterinary care, particularly in rural areas."[27]

Currently the University of Florida is the only school in Florida to offer a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program that is accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA).[28]

Veterinarian Shortage

According to a survey conducted by the American Pet Products Association (APPA), 70 percent of U.S. households, or about 90.5 million families, own a pet. This is an increase from 56 percent of U.S. households in 1988, and 67 percent in 2019.[29] As a result, experts say there is a shortage of veterinarians in the U.S., which is expected to result in the need for approximately 15,000 veterinarians by the year 2030.[30] A study from Banfield Pet Hospital reveals an estimated 75 million pets in the U.S. may not have access to the veterinary care they need by 2030, with an important factor being a critical shortage of veterinarians.[31]

The University of Florida's Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, Dana Zimmel, has indicated that there is a shortage of veterinarians in Florida, which in addition to pets has "1.7 million beef cattle and dairy cows, more horses than Kentucky and an alarming decline of manatee." The state's only veterinary medical college, the University of Florida, also reports that due to limited capacity, it must turn away 1,500 qualified candidates a year.[32]

According to the AVMA, "retention of veterinary practice staff members and attrition from the profession are ongoing and increasing."[33] The AVMA found that a midlevel practitioner may not be the best option to address these concerns, and that more time should be spent on the retention of veterinarians and credentialed veterinary technicians.[34]

However, according to a study conducted by the National Library of Medicine:

> The projected shortage of veterinarians has created a need to explore alternatives designed to meet society's future demands. A veterinary professional health care provider, similar to the human medical profession's physician assistant (PA), is one such alternative. It is suggested that perhaps veterinary professional associates, modeled after PAs, could be employed to handle routine veterinary care and

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[27] Colorado State University, College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, *About the veterinary professional associate (VPA)*, https://vetmedbiosci.colostate.edu/vpa/ (last visited Jan. 13, 2026).
[28] American Veterinary Medical Association, *Accredited Veterinary Colleges*, https://www.avma.org/education/center-for-veterinary-accreditation/accredited-veterinary-colleges (last visited January 13, 2026).
[29] Insurance Information Institute, *Facts + Statistics: Pet Ownership and Insurance*, https://www.iii.org/fact-statistic/facts-statistics-pet-ownership-and-insurance#:~:text=Seventy%20percent%20of%20U.S.%20households,and%2067%20percent%20in%202019. (last visited January 13, 2026).
[30] Spectrum News 13, *Mobile 'ElleVet' clinic helps relieve veterinarian shortage*, https://www.mynews13.com/fl/orlando/news/2023/02/03/the-ellevet-project-#:~:text=%E2%80%94%20Experts%20say%20there's%20a%20shortage,States%20may%20not%20get%20care. (last visited January 13, 2026).
[31] Banfield Pet Hospital, *75 million pets may not have access to veterinary care by 2030, New Banfield® study finds*, https://www.banfield.com/en/about-banfield/newsroom/press-releases/2020/75-million-pets-may-not-have-access-to-veterinary (last visited January 13, 2026).
[32] Dana Zimmel, *Florida needs more veterinarians | Column*, Tampa Bay Times (January 3, 2022), https://www.tampabay.com/opinion/2022/01/03/florida-needs-more-veterinarians-column/ (last visited January 13, 2026).
[33] American Veterinary Medical Association, AVMA News, *Idea of midlevel practitioner rejected in favor of better support, engagement of credentialed veterinary technicians* (Jan. 10, 2023), https://www.avma.org/news/idea-midlevel-practitioner-rejected-favor-better-support-engagement-credentialed-veterinary (last visited January 29, 2026).
[34] *Id.*

thereby allow veterinarians additional time to focus on the more demanding and challenging aspects of veterinary medicine. Perhaps a team approach, similar to the physician/PA team, could help the field of veterinary medicine to better serve both clients and patients. As veterinary medicine directs its attention toward the new challenges on the horizon, creative solutions will be needed. Perhaps some variation of a veterinary professional associate is worthy of future discussion.[35]

Rabies Vaccinations

Currently, all dogs, cats, and ferrets 4 months of age or older are required to be vaccinated by a licensed veterinarian or a person authorized under the indirect supervision of a veterinarian against rabies with a vaccine that is licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for use in those species.[36] Upon such vaccination, the licensed veterinarian is required to provide the animal's owner and the animal control authority with a rabies vaccination certificate. The veterinarian who administers or supervises the administration of the vaccination is authorized to affix his or her signature stamp in lieu of an actual signature.[37]

RECENT LEGISLATION:

YEAR	BILL #/SUBJECT	HOUSE/*SENATE* SPONSOR(S)	OTHER INFORMATION
2025	CS/HB 729 - Veterinary Professional Associates	Melo/ *Bradley*	The bill passed the House, but died in the Senate.
2024	HB 849 - Veterinary Practices	Killebrew, Buchanan/ *Bradley*	The bill became law on July 1, 2024.

OTHER RESOURCES:

DBPR: Veterinary Medicine Board Information

USDA: Veterinary Shortage Situations Map

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[35] Lori Kogan, Sherry Stewart, *Veterinary professional associates: does the profession's foresight include a mid-tier professional similar to physician assistants?,* National Library of Medicine (2009), https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19625672/ (last visited January 29, 2026).
[36] S. 828.30(1)(a), F.S.
[37] S. 828.30(3), F.S.

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Industries & Professional Activities Subcommittee	14 Y, 1 N, As CS	1/20/2026	Anstead	Thompson
THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:	• Removed the licensure and regulatory provisions for veterinary technicians, and veterinary technologists. • Removed the provision that increases the membership of the Board of Veterinary Medicine. • Removed the provisions regarding administration of medication by veterinary professional associates, veterinary technicians, and veterinary technologists. • Removed the provisions regarding liability of the supervising licensed veterinarian for acts or omissions of registered veterinary professional associates, veterinary technicians, or veterinary technologists.			
Commerce Committee			Hamon	Thompson

THIS BILL ANALYSIS HAS BEEN UPDATED TO INCORPORATE ALL OF THE CHANGES DESCRIBED ABOVE.

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to veterinary medicine; providing a short title; amending s. 474.201, F.S.; revising legislative findings, intent, and purpose; amending s. 474.202, F.S.; defining the term "veterinary professional associate"; amending s. 474.2021, F.S.; increasing the amount of time for which prescriptions based solely on a veterinary telehealth evaluation may be issued for certain drugs; amending s. 474.203, F.S.; revising the applicability of certain exemptions; creating s. 474.2126, F.S.; providing requirements for veterinary professional associates to receive certificates of registration from the Department of Business and Professional Regulation; requiring the department to make a list of veterinary professional associate registrants publicly available on its website; authorizing the department to suspend the registration of a veterinary professional associate upon a certain determination by the Board of Veterinary Medicine; authorizing the department to rescind the registration of a veterinary professional associate under certain circumstances; prohibiting a person from holding himself or herself out as a veterinary professional associate under certain circumstances; authorizing a registered veterinary

professional associate to engage in the practice of veterinary medicine under certain circumstances; prohibiting a registered veterinary professional associate from taking certain actions; providing exceptions; amending s. 828.30, F.S.; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. This act may be cited as the "Veterinary Workforce Innovation Act."

Section 2. Section 474.201, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

474.201 Legislative findings, intent, and purpose.—

(1) The Legislature finds that the practice of veterinary medicine is potentially dangerous to the public health and safety if conducted by incompetent and unlicensed practitioners. The legislative purpose in enacting this chapter is to ensure that every veterinarian practicing in this state meet minimum requirements for safe practice. It is the legislative intent that veterinarians who are not normally competent or who otherwise present a danger to the public ~~shall~~ be disciplined or prohibited from practicing in this state.

(2) The Legislature finds that the practice of educated,

trained, and experienced veterinary professional associates will increase consumer access to high-quality veterinary medical services at a reasonable cost to consumers, while also increasing the efficiency of the practice of veterinary medicine in this state.

Section 3. Present subsection (14) of section 474.202, Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (15), and a new subsection (14) is added to that section, to read:

474.202 Definitions.—As used in this chapter:

(14) "Veterinary professional associate" means an individual who has graduated with a master's degree or the equivalent in veterinary clinical care from an accredited institution and who meets the requirements to be registered by the department.

Section 4. Subsection (4) of section 474.2021, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

474.2021 Veterinary telehealth.—

(4) A veterinarian practicing veterinary telehealth:

(a) May not engage in the practice of veterinary telehealth unless it is within the context of a veterinarian/client/patient relationship;

(b) Shall practice in a manner consistent with his or her scope of practice and the prevailing professional standard of practice for a veterinarian who provides in-person veterinary services to patients in this state and shall employ sound,

professional judgment to determine whether using veterinary telehealth is an appropriate method for delivering medical advice or treatment to the patient;

(c) May use veterinary telehealth to perform an initial patient evaluation to establish the veterinarian/client/patient relationship if the evaluation is conducted using synchronous, audiovisual communication. The evaluation may not be performed using audio-only communications, text messaging, questionnaires, chatbots, or other similar means. If a veterinarian practicing telehealth conducts a patient evaluation sufficient to diagnose and treat the patient, the veterinarian is not required to research a patient's medical history or conduct a physical examination of the patient before using veterinary telehealth to provide a veterinary health care service to the patient;

(d) If the initial patient evaluation is performed using veterinary telehealth, must provide the client with a statement containing the veterinarian's name, license number, and contact information and the contact information for at least one physical veterinary clinic in the vicinity of the patient's location and instructions for how to receive patient follow-up care or assistance if the veterinarian and client are unable to communicate because of a technological or equipment failure or if there is an adverse reaction to treatment, and inform the client that, if medication is prescribed, the client may obtain a prescription that may be filled at the pharmacy of his or her

choice. The veterinarian shall obtain from the client a signed and dated statement indicating the client has received the required information before practicing veterinary telehealth;

(e) Shall prescribe all drugs and medications in accordance with all federal and state laws and the following requirements:

1. A veterinarian practicing veterinary telehealth may order, prescribe, or make available medicinal drugs or drugs specifically approved for use in animals by the United States Food and Drug Administration, the use of which conforms to the approved labeling. Prescriptions based solely on a telehealth evaluation may be issued for up to 6 months ~~1 month~~ for products labeled solely for flea and tick control and up to 30 ~~14~~ days of treatment for other animal drugs. Prescriptions based solely on a telehealth evaluation may not be renewed without an in-person examination.

2. A veterinarian practicing veterinary telehealth may not order, prescribe, or make available medicinal drugs or drugs as defined in s. 465.003 approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for human use or compounded antibacterial, antifungal, antiviral, or antiparasitic medications, unless the veterinarian has conducted an in-person physical examination of the animal or made medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where the animal is kept.

3. A veterinarian may not use veterinary telehealth to

prescribe a controlled substance as defined in chapter 893 unless the veterinarian has conducted an in-person physical examination of the animal or made medically appropriate and timely visits within the past year to the premises where the animal is kept.

4. A veterinarian practicing veterinary telehealth may not prescribe a drug or other medication for use on a horse engaged in racing or training at a facility under the jurisdiction of the Florida Gaming Control Commission or on a horse that is a covered horse as defined in the federal Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act, 15 U.S.C. ss. 3051 et seq.;

(f) Shall be familiar with available veterinary resources, including emergency resources, near the patient's location and be able to provide the client with a list of nearby veterinarians who may be able to see the patient in person upon the request of the client;

(g) Shall keep, maintain, and make available a summary of the patient record as provided in s. 474.2165; and

(h) May not use veterinary telehealth to issue an international or interstate travel certificate or a certificate of veterinary inspection.

Section 5. Paragraph (a) of subsection (5) and subsection (7) of section 474.203, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

474.203 Exemptions.—This chapter does not apply to:

(5)(a) Any person, or the person's regular employee,

administering to the ills or injuries of her or his own animals, including, but not limited to, castration, spaying, and dehorning of herd animals, unless title is transferred or employment provided for the purpose of circumventing this law. This exemption does not apply to any person licensed as a veterinarian in another state or foreign jurisdiction and practicing temporarily in this state. However, except as provided in s. 474.2126 or s. 828.30, only a veterinarian may immunize or treat an animal for diseases that are communicable to humans and that are of public health significance.

(7) Any veterinary aide, nurse, laboratory technician, preceptor, person registered pursuant to s. 474.2126, or other employee of a licensed veterinarian who administers medication or who renders auxiliary or supporting assistance under the responsible supervision of a licensed veterinarian, including those tasks identified by rule of the board requiring immediate supervision, provided that a registered veterinary professional associate is subject to s. 474.2126. However, the licensed veterinarian is responsible for all such acts performed under this subsection by persons under her or his supervision.

For the purposes of chapters 465 and 893, persons exempt pursuant to subsection (1), subsection (2), or subsection (4) are deemed to be duly licensed practitioners authorized by the laws of this state to prescribe drugs or medicinal supplies.

Section 6. Section 474.2126, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

474.2126 Veterinary professional associates; registration.—

(1) REGISTRATION.—

(a) A veterinary professional associate may apply to the department for registration by submitting a form prescribed by the board. The department shall consider for registration each qualified veterinary professional associate who the department verifies has submitted a completed application and meets the applicable requirements of this subsection.

(b) The department shall issue a certificate of registration to each veterinary professional associate applicant who the department verifies has graduated from the relevant accredited program and received a passing score on the relevant professional national competency examination approved by the board.

(c) The department shall make a list of registrants available to the public on the department's website.

(d) The department may suspend the registration of any veterinary professional associate who the board determines has caused serious harm to an animal due to negligence, incompetence, or misconduct related to duties performed under this section and in a manner inconsistent with the supervising veterinarian's specific direction, until such time as the

registrant has completed remedial training or education directed by the board.

(e) The department may rescind the registration of any veterinary professional associate who is convicted of animal cruelty under s. 828.12 or animal fighting under s. 828.122.

(2) PROHIBITION.—An individual may not hold himself or herself out as a registered veterinary professional associate or in any other way represent himself or herself as a veterinary professional associate unless he or she has a valid certificate of registration from the department.

(3) DUTIES AND ACTIONS OF A REGISTERED VETERINARY PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATE.—

(a) Unless otherwise prohibited by federal law, a registered veterinary professional associate may engage in the practice of veterinary medicine as defined in s. 474.202 or veterinary medicine as defined in s. 474.202, to the extent that he or she is competent and has the necessary training, current knowledge, and experience to provide such care, as delegated under the responsible supervision, as defined in s. 474.202, of a licensed veterinarian.

(b) A registered veterinary professional associate may not do any of the following:

1. Prescribe a controlled substance listed in s. 893.03, except that a registered veterinary professional associate may perform humane euthanasia and prepare, log, and administer

controlled substances for the purpose of analgesia, anesthesia, or humane euthanasia, as delegated by a licensed veterinarian and performed under responsible supervision.

2. Perform a surgical procedure, except that a veterinary professional associate may perform the following surgical procedures:

a. Orchiectomy;

b. Veterinary dental surgery; or

c. Veterinary suturing or stapling of skin lacerations, gingival incisions, or existing surgical incisions.

Section 7. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) and subsection (3) of section 828.30, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

828.30 Rabies vaccination of dogs, cats, and ferrets.—

(1)(a) All dogs, cats, and ferrets 4 months of age or older must be vaccinated by a licensed veterinarian or a person authorized under paragraph (b) or s. 474.2126 against rabies with a vaccine that is licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture for use in those species.

(3) Upon vaccination against rabies, the licensed veterinarian shall provide the animal's owner and the animal control authority with a rabies vaccination certificate. Each animal control authority and veterinarian shall use the "Rabies Vaccination Certificate" of the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians (NASPHV) or an equivalent form approved by the local government that contains all the

information required by the NASPHV Rabies Vaccination Certificate. The veterinarian who administers the rabies vaccination or who supervises the administration of the rabies vaccination as provided in paragraph (1)(b) or s. 474.2126 to an animal as authorized under this section may affix his or her signature stamp in lieu of an actual signature.

Section 8. This act shall take effect January 1, 2027.

HB 893

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BILL ANALYSIS

This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

BILL #: HB 893	**COMPANION BILL:** SB 1000 (Grall)
TITLE: Trust Fund Interest for Purposes Approved by Supreme Court	**LINKED BILLS:** None
SPONSOR(S): Koster	**RELATED BILLS:** None.

Committee References

Insurance & Banking	➤	Judiciary	➤	Commerce
16 Y, 0 N		20 Y, 0 N		

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:
The bill expressly authorizes a financial institution to hold funds in an interest-bearing trust account of a lawyer or law firm. The bill requires financial institutions to remit any interest and dividends earned on these accounts to Florida Supreme Court authorized entities for the purposes of providing free legal services or for other purposes expressly authorized by the Florida Supreme Court. The bill establishes required interest rates for these accounts.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:
The bill may have an indeterminate impact on the private sector.

JUMP TO SUMMARY ANALYSIS RELEVANT INFORMATION BILL HISTORY

ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

The bill expressly authorizes a financial institution to hold funds in an interest-bearing trust account of a lawyer or law firm, commonly referred to as an "Interest on Trust Account" or "IOTA." (Section 1).

The bill requires financial institutions to remit any interest or dividends earned on IOTAs to an entity established by the Florida Supreme Court for the purpose of providing free legal services to low-income individuals or for other purposes expressly authorized by the Florida Supreme Court. (Section 1).

The bill requires financial institutions holding IOTAs to pay, net of all fees and charges assessed by the financial institution, interest or dividends at the Wall Street Journal Prime rate in effect on the first business day of each month, less 300 basis points, with a floor of 0.25 percent and a ceiling of 1.5 percent. (Section 1).

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2026. (Section 2).

FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

PRIVATE SECTOR:

The bill may have an indeterminate impact on the private sector. The bill's limits on interest rates may encourage more financial institutions to hold interest-bearing trust accounts of a lawyer or law firm. Further, entities such as the Funding Florida Legal Aid foundation may see a change in interest revenue as a result of the interest rate limits.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Financial Institution:
Under Florida's financial institutions codes, a "financial institution" means a state or federal savings or thrift association, bank, savings bank, trust company, international bank agency, international banking corporation, international branch, international representative office, international administrative office, international trust entity, international trust company representative office, qualified limited service affiliate, credit union, or an agreement corporation operating pursuant to s. 25 of the Federal Reserve Act, 12 U.S.C. ss. 601 et seq. or Edge Act corporation organized pursuant to s. 25(a) of the Federal Reserve Act, 12 U.S.C. ss. 611 et seq. [1]

Regulation of lawyers:
The Florida Constitution grants the Florida Supreme Court the exclusive jurisdiction to regulate the admission of persons to the practice of law and the discipline of persons admitted. [2]

The Florida Supreme Court has established the "authority and responsibilities of The Florida Bar" through the Rules Regulating the Florida Bar. [3] Chapter 5 of the Rules contains the "Rules Regulating Trust Accounts," which all attorneys who maintain trust accounts must abide by.

The IOTA program:
Under Rule 5-1.1(a)(1) of the Rules Regulating the Florida Bar, lawyers must hold in trust, separate from the lawyer's own property, funds and property of clients or third persons that are in the lawyer's possession in connection with representation. [4]

Lawyer trust accounts generally contain funds such as retainer payments, discovery or litigation costs paid in advance, filing fees, or settlement awards. Often the amount of money that a lawyer handles for a single client is small or held for only a short period of time, and therefore cannot earn interest for the client in excess of the costs incurred to collect said interest. [5] Traditionally, lawyers have placed these funds into pooled trust accounts containing other nominal or short-term client funds. [6]

In 1981, the Florida Supreme Court implemented the nation's first IOTA program. [7] According to the American Bar Association, these programs now exist in all 50 states, Washington D.C., Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. [8]

Under Rule 5-1.1(g)(2) of the Rules Regulating the Florida Bar, all nominal or short-term funds belonging to clients or third persons that are placed in trust with any member of The Florida Bar in the state of Florida must be deposited into one or more IOTA accounts, unless the funds may earn income for the client or third person in excess of the costs incurred to secure the income. [9] Under the IOTA program, lawyers handling nominal or short-term funds that cannot earn net income for clients place these funds into a single, pooled, interest-bearing trust account. [10]

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[1] S. 655.005(1)(i), F.S.
[2] FLA. CONST. art. V, s. 15.
[3] The Florida Bar, *Rules Regulating the Florida Bar,* https://www-media.floridabar.org/uploads/2025/12/2026_06-DEC-RRTFB-12-5-2025.pdf (last visited Jan. 27, 2026).
[4] R. Regulating Fla. Bar Rule 5-1.1(a)(1).
[5] American Bar Association, *Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts*, https://www.americanbar.org/groups/interest_lawyers_trust_accounts/overview/ (last visited Jan. 27, 2026).
[6] *Id.*
[7] *In re Interest on Trust Accounts*, 356 So.2d 799 (Fla. 1978).
[8] American Bar Association, *Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts*, https://www.americanbar.org/groups/interest_lawyers_trust_accounts/overview/ (last visited Jan. 27, 2026).
[9] R. Regulating Fla. Bar Rule 5-1.1(g)(2).
[10] American Bar Association, *Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts*, https://www.americanbar.org/groups/interest_lawyers_trust_accounts/overview/ (last visited Jan. 27, 2026).

Funding Florida Legal Aid:
In 1956, the Florida Bar created a non-profit organization, The Florida Bar Foundation, and subsequently changed the name of the foundation to "Funding Florida Legal Aid" ("Foundation") in 2023. [11] The principal support for the Foundation is derived from the interest and dividends earned on IOTAs. [12]

IOTA interest rates:
On March 16, 2023, the Florida Supreme Court adopted amendments to the Rules Regulating the Florida Bar, including provisions regulating trust fund accounts. The 2023 amendments:

- Expanded the definition of an interest or dividend-bearing account to include a business or consumer deposit account, non-maturing deposit, an investment product, a daily financial institution repurchase agreement or a money market account. [13]
- Required eligible institutions to maintain IOTA accounts that pay the highest interest rate or dividend generally available from the institution to its non-IOTA business or consumer account customers when IOTA accounts meet or exceed the same minimum balance qualifications. [14]
- Mandated that eligible institutions tie minimum interest rates for IOTA accounts to the Wall Street Journal Prime Rate (indexed rate). [15]

The Florida Supreme Court's 2023 amendments implemented the following formula for determining the required interest rate for IOTAs:

- When the Wall Street Journal Prime Rate ("indexed rate") is between 325 and 499 basis points (3.25% and 4.99%), the minimum interest rate paid net of all fees and service charges ("yield") must be no less than 300 basis points (3.00%) below the indexed rate in effect on the first business day of each month.
- When the indexed rate is 500 basis points (5.00%) or above, the yield must be no less than 40% of the indexed rate in effect on the first business day of each month. [16]

Following the change in interest rate calculation, funds for the Foundation increased by over $200 million. [17]

Wall Street Journal Prime Rate:
The Wall Street Journal Prime Rate is an index used by banks to set rates on consumer lending products. [18] To establish this rate, the Wall Street Journal regularly surveys the 30 largest banks in the United States to determine what interest rate they are charging their customers with the highest-rated credit for short-term loans. [19] When 75 percent of the 30 banks change their prime rate, the Wall Street Journal changes its rate. [20]

[11] FFLA, Funding Florida Legal Aid, Leadership and Funding for Justice in Florida, https://fundingfla.org/about-ffla/fflaoverview/ (last visited Jan. 27, 2026).
[12] *Id.*
[13] R. Regulating Fla. Bar Rule 5-1.1(g)(1)(E).
[14] R. Regulating Fla. Bar Rule 5-1.1(g)(5)(A).
[15] R. Regulating Fla. Bar Rule 5-1.1(g)(5)(B).
[16] *Id.*
[17] FFLA, Financial Stewardship, https://fundingfla.org/about-ffla/ffla-finances/ (last visited Jan. 27, 2026).
[18] Bankrate, Wall Street Journal Prime rate https://www.bankrate.com/rates/interest-rates/wall-street-prime-rate/ (last visited Jan. 27, 2026).
[19] *Id.*
[20] *Id.*

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Insurance & Banking Subcommittee	16 Y, 0 N	1/21/2026	Brackett	Highsmith
Judiciary Committee	20 Y, 0 N	1/27/2026	Kramer	Mawn
Commerce Committee			Hamon	Highsmith

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to trust fund interest for purposes approved by the Supreme Court; creating s. 655.98, F.S.; authorizing financial institutions to hold funds in specified trust accounts used for specified purposes expressly authorized by Supreme Court rule; requiring certain entities to use interest and dividends for specified purposes; requiring certain financial institutions to pay specified interest or dividends; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 655.98 Florida Statutes, is created to read:

655.98 Lawyer or law firm trust account interest rates.—A financial institution may hold funds in an interest-bearing trust account of a lawyer or law firm in which the institution remits interest or dividends on the balance of the deposited funds to an entity established by the Supreme Court. Such entity shall use the interest or dividends to provide or facilitate the provision of free legal services to low-income individuals or for such other purposes as may be expressly authorized by rule of the Supreme Court. If the financial institution holds such an account, it must pay, net of all fees and charges assessed by

CODING: Words stricken are deletions; words underlined are additions.

the financial institution, interest or dividends at the Wall Street Journal prime rate in effect on the first business day of each month, less 300 basis points, with a floor of 0.25 percent and a ceiling of 1.5 percent.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BILL ANALYSIS

This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

BILL #: CS/HB 919	**COMPANION BILL:** CS/SB 706 (Mayfield)
TITLE: Commercial Service Airports	**LINKED BILLS:** None
SPONSOR(S): Weinberger and Kendall	**RELATED BILLS:** None

Committee References

Economic Infrastructure
12 Y, 3 N, As CS

➤

Commerce

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:
The bill preempts to the state the naming of major commercial service airports. The bill renames the Palm Beach International Airport as the "Donald J. Trump International Airport," subject to certain approvals and execution of certain agreements, but retains the current names for all other major commercial service airports, including Orlando International Airport, Miami International Airport, Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport, Tampa International Airport, Southwest Florida International Airport, and Jacksonville International Airport. The bill requires an annual review to identify airports that may be added or removed from this list based on a change in status as a major commercial service airport.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:
The bill appears to have a negative impact on local government expenditures associated with renaming the Palm Beach International Airport.

JUMP TO SUMMARY ANALYSIS RELEVANT INFORMATION BILL HISTORY

ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

The bill expressly preempts to the state the naming of major commercial service airports. The bill defines a major commercial service airport as an airport providing commercial service which is a medium or large hub airport under the classification criteria established by the Federal Aviation Administration. (Section 1)

The bill provides that the major commercial service airports in the state are named as follows: (Section 1)

- The airport located at One Jeff Fuqua Boulevard in Orlando is named "Orlando International Airport."
- The airport located at 2100 NW 42nd Avenue in Miami is named "Miami International Airport."
- The airport located at 100 Terminal Drive in Fort Lauderdale is named "Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport."
- The airport located at 4100 George J. Bean Parkway in Tampa is named "Tampa International Airport."
- The airport located at 11000 Terminal Access Road in Fort Meyers is named "Southwest Florida International Airport."
- The airport located at 1000 James L Turnage Boulevard in West Palm Beach is named "Donald J. Trump International Airport," subject to the approval of the Federal Aviation Administration and execution of an agreement granting Palm Beach County the perpetual and unrestricted right to use the name at no cost for all airport-related purposes.
- The airport located at 2400 Yankee Clipper Drive in Jacksonville is named "Jacksonville International Airport."

The bill provides that each name remains valid if an airport no longer meets the classification criteria to be a major commercial service airport. The bill requires the department to review this list annually to identify airports that

may be added or removed based on a change in status as a major commercial service airport. If the department identifies such a change in status for any airport, it must notify the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives 60 days before the next regular legislative session. (Section 1)

The bill requires government records created on or after July 1, 2026, to use the airport names provided in the bill. (Section 1)

The bill provides clarification regarding construction of, and compliance with, the provisions of the bill. Specifically, the bill:

- Provides that for purposes of the bill, airport names are branding designations only and may not be construed to require the creation of a new legal entity.
- Does not require a political subdivision[1] to amend any existing agreements solely to update references to the airport name or require a political subdivision to contract in the name of the airport provided in the bill.
- Provides that, notwithstanding any other provision of law, a political subdivision may not be construed to be in violation of any state law for using the airport name provided in the bill.
- Provides that a political subdivision is in compliance with the requirements of the bill if it diligently pursues all necessary approvals and agreements to implement the name change required by the bill and timely commences[2] signage and branding changes upon receipt of such approvals. (Section 1)

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2026. (Section 2)

FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

The bill appears to have a negative impact on local government expenditures associated with renaming the Palm Beach International Airport.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Local Government Authority

The Florida Constitution grants county and municipal governments broad home rule authority. Specifically, non-charter county governments may exercise those powers of self-government that are provided by general or special law.[3] Those counties operating under a county charter have all powers of self-government not inconsistent with general law or special law approved by vote of the electors.[4] Likewise, municipalities[5] have those governmental, corporate, and proprietary powers enabling them to conduct municipal government, perform their functions and provide services, and exercise any power for municipal purposes, except as otherwise provided by law.[6]

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[1] The bill provides that, for purposes of the bill, the term "political subdivision" means a political subdivision as defined in s. 333.01, F.S., which owns and controls an airport listed in the bill.

[2] The bill provides that, for purposes of the bill, the term "timely commences" means to initiate planning, procurement, and implementation within a reasonable period after receiving all necessary approvals, taking into account the availability of budgeted funds and the timeframes necessary to comply with applicable procurement laws, regulations, and procedures.

[3] Art. VIII, s. 1(f), Fla. Const.

[4] Art. VIII, s. 1(g), Fla. Const.

[5] A municipality is a local government entity created to perform functions and provide services for the particular benefit of the population within the municipality, in addition to those provided by the county. The term "municipality" may be used interchangeably with the terms "town," "city," and "village."

[6] Art. VIII, s. 2(b), Fla. Const. *See also* s. 166.021(1), F.S.

A "special district" is a unit of local government created for a particular purpose, with jurisdiction to operate within a limited geographic boundary.[7] Special districts are created by general law,[8] special act,[9] local ordinance,[10] or by rule of the Governor and Cabinet.[11] A special district has only those powers expressly provided by, or reasonably implied from, the authority provided in the district's charter. Special districts provide specific municipal services in addition to, or in place of, those provided by a municipality or county.[12] As of January 25, 2026, there are 601 active dependent[13] special districts and 1,486 active independent special districts in Florida.[14]

State Preemption

Local governments have broad authority to legislate on any matter that is not inconsistent with federal or state law. A local government enactment may be inconsistent with state law if (1) the Legislature "has preempted a particular subject area" or (2) the local enactment conflicts with a state statute. State preemption precludes a local government from exercising authority in that particular area.[15]

Florida law recognizes two types of preemption: express and implied. Express preemption requires a specific legislative statement; it cannot be implied or inferred.[16] Express preemption of a field by the Legislature must be accomplished by clear language stating that intent.[17] In cases where the Legislature expressly or specifically preempts an area, there is no problem with ascertaining what the Legislature intended.[18] In cases determining the validity of ordinances enacted in the face of state preemption, the effect has been to find such ordinances null and void.[19]

Federal Classification of Airports

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) oversees the planning and development of airports across the nation with a focus on safety and security. The FAA classifies all airports based on the type of service provided and the number of passengers that board aircraft (passenger boardings).[20] Each commercial service airport is further classified by hub type based on the percentage or number of annual U.S. commercial passenger boardings that the airport receives, as shown in the table below.

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[7] *See Halifax Hospital Medical Center v. State of Fla., et al.*, 278 So. 3d 545, 547 (Fla. 2019).
[8] S. 189.031(3), F.S.
[9] *Id.*
[10] S. 189.02(1), F.S.
[11] S. 190.005(1), F.S. *See*, generally, s. 189.012(6), F.S.
[12] *Local Gov't Formation Manual,* p. 56, https://www.flhouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loaddoc.aspx?PublicationType=Committees&CommitteeId=3304&Session=2025&DocumentType=General+Publications&FileName=Local+Government+Formation+Manual+%5b2024-2026%5d.pdf (last visited Jan. 25, 2026).
[13] Dependent special districts are under some control by a single county or municipality. S. 189.012(2), F.S. An independent special district is any district that is not a dependent special district. S. 189.012(3), F.S. A special district that includes more than one county is independent unless it lies wholly within the boundaries of a single municipality.
[14] Florida Department of Commerce, Official List of Special Districts, https://specialdistrictreports.floridajobs.org/OfficialList/CustomList (last visited Jan. 25, 2026).
[15] Wolf, *The Effectiveness of Home Rule: A Preemptions and Conflict Analysis*, 83 Fla. B.J. 92 (June 2009), https://www.floridabar.org/the-florida-bar-journal/the-effectiveness-of-home-rule-a-preemption-and-conflict-analysis/ (last visited Jan. 25, 2026).
[16] *See City of Hollywood v. Mulligan*, 934 So. 2d 1238, 1243 (Fla. 2006); *Phantom of Clearwater, Inc. v. Pinellas County*, 894 So. 2d 1011, 1018 (Fla. 2d DCA 2005), approved in *Phantom of Brevard, Inc. v. Brevard County*, 3 So. 3d 309 (Fla. 2008).
[17] *Mulligan*, 934 So. 2d at 1243.
[18] *Sarasota Alliance for Fair Elections, Inc. v. Browning*, 28 So. 3d 880, 886 (Fla. 2010).
[19] *See, e.g., Nat'l Rifle Ass'n of Am., Inc. v. City of S. Miami,* 812 So.2d 504 (Fla. 3d DCA 2002).
[20] 49 U.S.C. § 47102. Passenger boardings are defined as revenue passenger boardings in the United States in the prior calendar year on an aircraft in service in air commerce. 49 U.S.C. § 47102(15).

Commercial Service Airport Classifications[21]			
		Hub Type (Percentage / Number of Annual U.S. Passenger Boardings)	**Common Name**
Commercial Service Publicly owned airports with at least 2,500 passenger boardings each year and that receive scheduled passenger service	**Primary** More than 10,000 passenger boardings each year	**Large** (1% or more) **Medium** (0.25% to 1%) **Small** (0.05% to 0.25%) **Nonhub** (More than 10,000 but less than 0.05%)	**Large Hub** **Medium Hub** **Small Hub** **Nonhub Primary**
	Nonprimary	**Nonhub** - At least 2,500 and no more than 10,000	**Nonhub Nonprimary**

Large and Medium Hub Airports in Florida

Under the FAA's classification system, Florida is home to four large hub airports and three medium hub airports.[22]

Florida's large hub airports are:
- Orlando International Airport,
- Miami International Airport,
- Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport, and
- Tampa International Airport.

Florida's medium hub airports are:
- Southwest Florida International Airport,
- Palm Beach International Airport, and
- Jacksonville International Airport.

Each of these airports is owned and operated by a unit of local government.[23]

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[21] Federal Aviation Administration, *Airport Categories*, https://www.faa.gov/airports/planning_capacity/categories (last visited Jan. 25, 2026). *See also* 49 U.S.C. § 47102.
[22] Federal Aviation Administration, *List of NPIAS Airports, Oct 2024*, https://www.faa.gov/sites/faa.gov/files/airports/planning_capacity/npias/current/ARP-NPIAS-2025-2029-Appendix-A.pdf (last visited Jan. 25, 2026).
[23] Orlando International Airport is operated by the Greater Orlando Aviation Authority, an independent special district. *See* Ch, 98-492, L.O.F.; *see also* Greater Orlando Aviation Authority, *History of MCO*, https://flymco.com/airport-business/mcohistory/ (last visited Jan. 25, 2026). Miami International Airport is owned by Miami-Dade County and operated by the Miami-Dade Aviation Department. *See* Miami International Airport, *About Us*, https://www.miami-airport.com/about_us.asp (last visited Jan. 25, 2026). Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport is owned by Broward County and operated by the Broward County Aviation Department. *See* Broward.Org, *Airport,* https://www.broward.org/Airport/Business/about/Pages/default2.aspx (last visited Jan. 25, 2026). Tampa International Airport is operated by the Hillsborough County Aviation Authority, an independent special district. *See* Ch. 2022-252, L.O.F.; *see also* Tampa International Airport, *About HCAA*, https://www.tampaairport.com/business/airport-administration/about-hcaa (last visited Jan. 25, 2026). Southwest Florida International Airport is operated by the Lee County Port Authority, a dependent special district of Lee County. *See* Lee County Port Authority, *About LCPA*, https://www.flylcpa.com/about-lcpa/lee-county-port-authority/ (last visited Jan. 25, 2026). Palm Beach International Airport is operated by the Palm Beach County Department of Airports. *See* Palm Beach International Airport, *History*, https://www.pbia.org/about/history/ (last visited Jan. 25, 2026). Jacksonville International Airport is owned and operated by the Jacksonville Aviation Authority, a

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Economic Infrastructure Subcommittee	12 Y, 3 N, As CS	1/28/2026	Keating	Ray
THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:	• Provided that renaming of a certain airport is subject to the approval of the Federal Aviation Administration and execution of an agreement for naming rights. • Provided construction and clarifies effect of the bill. • Provided a definition of the term "political subdivision" for purposes of the bill. • Clarified that a political subdivision is in compliance with the bill if it diligently pursues all necessary approvals and agreements to implement the name change required by the bill.			
Commerce Committee			Hamon	Rubottom

THIS BILL ANALYSIS HAS BEEN UPDATED TO INCORPORATE ALL OF THE CHANGES DESCRIBED ABOVE.

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dependent special district of the City of Jacksonville. *See* Jacksonville International Airport, *About JAA*, https://flyjacksonville.com/content.aspx?id=67 (last visited Jan. 25, 2026).

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to commercial service airports; amending s. 332.0075, F.S.; defining the term "major commercial service airport"; preempting the naming of major commercial service airports to the state; providing names for major commercial service airports; providing that renaming a specified airport is subject to approval of the Federal Aviation Administration and execution of a certain agreement; providing that such airport names continue to be valid under certain circumstances; requiring the Department of Transportation to annually review provisions naming major commercial service airports for a certain purpose; requiring the department to provide certain notice to the Legislature; providing requirements for such notice; requiring that certain government records created on or after a certain date use such airport names; specifying that airport names are branding designations; providing construction; defining the terms "political subdivision" and "timely commences"; providing that a political subdivision is in compliance with certain provisions under specified circumstances; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Paragraph (e) is added to subsection (1) of section 332.0075, Florida Statutes, and subsection (7) is added to that section, to read:

332.0075 Commercial service airports; transparency and accountability; penalty.—

(1) As used in this section, the term:

(e) "Major commercial service airport" means an airport providing commercial service which is a medium or large hub airport under the classification criteria established by the Federal Aviation Administration.

(7)(a) The naming of major commercial service airports is preempted to the state.

(b) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, the major commercial service airports are named as follows:

1. The airport located at One Jeff Fuqua Boulevard in Orlando, or nearest thereto, is the "Orlando International Airport."

2. The airport located at 2100 NW 42nd Avenue in Miami, or nearest thereto, is the "Miami International Airport."

3. The airport located at 100 Terminal Drive in Fort Lauderdale, or nearest thereto, is the "Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport."

4. The airport located at 4100 George J. Bean Parkway in Tampa, or nearest thereto, is the "Tampa International Airport."

5. The airport located at 11000 Terminal Access Road in Fort Myers, or nearest thereto, is the "Southwest Florida International Airport."

6. The airport located at 1000 James L Turnage Boulevard in West Palm Beach, or nearest thereto, currently known as the "Palm Beach International Airport," shall be renamed as the "Donald J. Trump International Airport," subject to approval of the Federal Aviation Administration and execution of an agreement with the rights holder authorizing the commercial use of "Donald J. Trump International Airport" by Palm Beach County, which must, at a minimum, grant Palm Beach County the perpetual and unrestricted right to use the name "Donald J. Trump International Airport," as well as reasonable abbreviations thereof or deviations therefrom, at no cost, in signage, advertising, marketing, merchandising, and promotions and for the branding of the airport and its operations, services, and amenities, and all related purposes.

7. The airport located at 2400 Yankee Clipper Drive in Jacksonville, or nearest thereto, is the "Jacksonville International Airport."

(c) If an airport listed in paragraph (b) no longer meets the classification criteria to be a major commercial service airport, the airport name continues to be valid.

(d) The department shall review paragraph (b) annually to identify airports that may be added to or removed from paragraph

(b) based on any change in status as a major commercial service airport. If the department identifies any such airport, it must notify the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives 60 days before the next regular legislative session. The notice must include the name of the airport and specify the reasons for the airport's change in status.

(e) Government records created on or after July 1, 2026, which refer to airports listed in paragraph (b) must use the airport names provided in paragraph (b). For purposes of this subsection, airport names are branding designations only and do not create or require the creation of a new legal entity. This paragraph does not require a political subdivision to amend any existing agreement with any person or entity solely to update references to the airport name or require a political subdivision to contract in the name of the airport listed in paragraph (b).

(f) For purposes of this subsection, the term "political subdivision" means a political subdivision as defined in s. 333.01 that owns and controls an airport listed in paragraph (b). Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a political subdivision does not violate any state law, including, but not limited to, chapter 495 and s. 540.08, by using the airport name provided in paragraph (b).

(g) A political subdivision is in compliance with this subsection if it diligently pursues all necessary approvals and

agreements to implement an airport name change required under this subsection and timely commences signage and branding changes upon receipt of such approvals. For purposes of this paragraph, the term "timely commences" means to initiate planning, procurement, and implementation within a reasonable period after receiving all necessary approvals, taking into account the availability of budgeted funds and the timeframes necessary to comply with applicable procurement laws, regulations, and procedures.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BILL ANALYSIS

This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

BILL #: HB 1509	**COMPANION BILL:** SB 1708 (Gaetz)
TITLE: Veterinarian Licensure by Endorsement	**LINKED BILLS:** None
SPONSOR(S): Johnson	**RELATED BILLS:** None

Committee References

Industries & Professional Activities
16 Y, 0 N

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Commerce

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:
The bill revises the requirement for veterinarian licensure by endorsement, removing the requirement that such applicants have held a valid, active license for the three years immediately preceding their application, and instead, requiring the applicants to hold a valid, active license "in good standing" to practice veterinary medicine in another state, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:
Indeterminate. The bill may have a positive fiscal impact on the private sector.

JUMP TO SUMMARY ANALYSIS RELEVANT INFORMATION BILL HISTORY

ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

The bill revises the provision in the veterinary medical practice (practice act) that governs veterinary licensure by endorsement, by removing the requirement that the applicant's out-of-state license be held for the three years immediately preceding the application for licensure, and instead, requires the applicant's out-of-state license to be in good standing. (Section 1)

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2026. (Section 2)

FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

PRIVATE SECTOR:

Indeterminate. The bill may allow additional veterinarians to be eligible to practice in the state, which will increase access to veterinary care for animal owners and patients.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Practice of Veterinary Medicine

The Board of Veterinary Medicine (Board), created within the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR), implements the provisions of ch. 474, F.S., relating to the veterinary medical practice act (practice act). The purpose of the practice act is to ensure that every veterinarian practicing in this state meets minimum requirements for safe practices to protect public health and safety.[1]

[1] S. 474.201, F.S.

A "veterinarian" is a health care practitioner licensed by the Board to engage in the practice of veterinary medicine in Florida.[2] Veterinarians are subject to disciplinary action from the Board for various violations of the practice act.[3] Veterinary establishments must have a premises permit issued by DBPR.[4] Veterinarian licenses are renewed every two years,[5] however premises permits have no expiration date.

Veterinary medicine includes, with respect to animals:[6]

- Surgery;
- Acupuncture;
- Obstetrics;
- Dentistry;
- Physical therapy;
- Radiology;
- Theriogenology (reproductive medicine); and
- Other branches or specialties of veterinary medicine.

The "practice of veterinary medicine" is the diagnosis of medical conditions of animals, and the prescribing or administering of medicine and treatment to animals for the prevention, cure, or relief of a wound, fracture, bodily injury, or disease, or holding oneself out as performing any of these functions.[7]

The practice act defines a "patient" as any animal for which the veterinarian practices veterinary medicine.[8]

The practice act defines a "veterinarian/client/patient relationship" (VCPR) as one in which a veterinarian has assumed responsibility for making medical judgments regarding the health of an animal and its need for medical treatment.[9]

Veterinarians are required to hold a valid, active license to practice veterinary medicine.[10] Pathways to licensure include licensure by:

- Examination;[11]
- Endorsement;[12] or
- Temporary licensure.[13]

Licensure by Examination

Licensure by examination requires the applicant to take the following examinations, as chosen by the Board:[14]

- North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE) developed by the International Council for Veterinary Assessment (ICVA); and
- Laws and rules related to the practice of veterinary medicine (the Florida laws and rules examination)[15].

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[2] S. 474.202(11), F.S.
[3] Ss. 474.213 and 474.214, F.S.
[4] S. 474.215(1), F.S.
[5] S. 474.211, F.S.
[6] *See* s. 474.202(13), F.S. Section 474.202(1), F.S., defines "animal" as "any mammal other than a human being or any bird, amphibian, fish, or reptile, wild or domestic, living or dead."
[7] *See* s. 474.202(9), F.S. Also included is the determination of the health, fitness, or soundness of an animal, and the performance of any manual procedure for the diagnosis or treatment of pregnancy or fertility or infertility of animals.
[8] S. 474.202(8), F.S.
[9] S. 474.202(12), F.S.
[10] S. 474.213(1)(i), F.S.
[11] See s. 474.207, F.S.
[12] See s. 474.217, F.S.
[13] See s. 474.2125, F.S.
[14] R. 61G18-11, F.A.C.
[15] DBPR, *Veterinary Medicine Examinations*, https://www2.myfloridalicense.com/examination-information/veterinary-medicine-examinations/ (Last visited Jan. 29, 2026).

DBPR is required to license each applicant who the Board certifies has:[16]

- Completed the application form and remitted an examination fee set by the Board.[17]
- Successfully completed the examination or an examination determined by the Board to be equivalent.
- Demonstrated knowledge of the laws and rules governing the practice of veterinary medicine in Florida in a manner designated by rules of the Board.

Applicants are required to have graduated from a college of veterinary medicine in order to qualify for licensure by examination.[18] The college of veterinary medicine must be:

- Accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education; or
- Listed in the American Veterinary Medical Association Roster of Veterinary Colleges of the World and obtained a certificate from the Education Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates or the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence.

Licensure by Endorsement

DBPR must issue a license by endorsement to applicants who pay the required fee and successfully complete the Florida laws and rules examination.[19] Applicants who have never had disciplinary action taken against any professional license by any jurisdiction may, in lieu of taking the Florida laws and rules examination, complete a Board approved 2 hour continuing education course on Florida's laws and rules as set forth in r. 61G18-16.002(2), F.A.C.[20] In addition, an applicant for endorsement must either:

- **Hold, and have held for the three years immediately preceding** the application for licensure, a valid, active license to practice veterinary medicine in another state of the United States, the District of Columbia, or a territory of the United States, provided that the applicant has successfully completed a state, regional, national, or other examination that is equivalent to or more stringent than the examination required by the board; **or**
- **Have graduated from a college of veterinary medicine** and:
    - Successfully completed a state, regional, national, or other examination which is equivalent to or more stringent than the DBPR examination; and
    - Passed the Board's clinical competency examination or another clinical competency examination.

Temporary Licensure

The Board must adopt rules[21] providing for the issuance of a temporary license to a veterinarian licensed in another state, who would qualify for licensure by endorsement, to provide veterinary medical services in this state[22] In order to be issued a temporary license, an applicant must demonstrate to the Board that the veterinarian meets the following qualifications:[23]

- Has filed an application identifying the name and address of the owner of the animals to be treated, the type of animals to be treated and their injury or disease, the location the treatment is to be performed, and the names, addresses, and titles of all persons entering the state with the applicant to perform the treatment, or has filed an application and is responding to an emergency as defined in s. 252.34(2), F.S., for the treatment of animals of multiple owners;
- Has paid the temporary licensure fee;
- Holds an active license to practice veterinary medicine in another state of the United States and that any license to practice veterinary medicine that he has ever held has never been revoked, suspended or

[16] S. 474.207(2), F.S.
[17] R. 61G18-12, F.A.C.
[18] S. 474.207(2)(b), F.S.
[19] R. 61G18-14.002(4), F.A.C.
[20] R. 61G18-14.002(5), F.A.C.
[21] R. 61G18-25.001, F.A.C.
[22] S. 474.2125(1), F.S.
[23] R. 61G18-25.001(1), F.A.C.

otherwise acted against by the licensing authority. For the purposes of this rule, the Board interprets the phrase "valid license" as requiring an active license;
- Is neither the subject of any pending prosecution nor has he ever been convicted of any offense which is related to the practice of veterinary medicine; and
- Satisfies the qualifications for licensure by endorsement, except for having demonstrated knowledge of the laws and rules of veterinary medicine in this State as required by s. 474.217(1)(a), F.S.

Temporary licenses are valid for no more than 30 days after issuance. After the expiration of 30 days, a new license is required.[24]

Veterinarian Shortage

Pets
According to a survey conducted by the American Pet Products Association, 70 percent of U.S. households, or about 90.5 million families, own a pet. This is an increase from 56 percent of U.S. households in 1988, and 67 percent in 2019.[25] As a result, experts say there is a shortage of veterinarians in the U.S., which is expected to result in the need for approximately 15,000 veterinarians by the year 2030.[26] A study from Banfield Pet Hospital reveals an estimated 75 million pets in the U.S. may not have access to the veterinary care they need by 2030, with an important factor being a critical shortage of veterinarians.[27]

Livestock
According to a study conducted by Johns Hopkins University, the U.S. has lost 90 percent of its large animal and livestock veterinarians since the end of World War II.[28] The University of Florida's Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, Dana Zimmel, has indicated that there is a shortage of veterinarians in Florida, which in addition to pets has "1.7 million beef cattle and dairy cows, more horses than Kentucky and an alarming decline of manatee." The state's only veterinary medical college, the University of Florida, also reports that due to limited capacity, it must turn away 1,500 qualified candidates a year.[29] According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture, two factors are largely responsible for the shortage: the cost of obtaining a doctor of veterinary medicine degree and the pay disparity between companion animal veterinarians and large animal veterinarians. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), "the shortage has proven to be an especially salient issue for rural communities across the country and has broad implications for livestock health, economic stability in the agricultural sector, and America's food security."[30]

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[24] S. 474.2125(1), F.S.
[25] Insurance Information Institute, *Facts + Statistics: Pet Ownership and Insurance*, https://www.iii.org/fact-statistic/facts-statistics-pet-ownership-and-insurance#:~:text=Seventy%20percent%20of%20U.S.%20households,and%2067%20percent%20in%202019. (last visited January 13, 2026).
[26] Spectrum News 13, *Mobile 'ElleVet' clinic helps relieve veterinarian shortage*, https://www.mynews13.com/fl/orlando/news/2023/02/03/the-ellevet-project-#:~:text=%E2%80%94%20Experts%20say%20there's%20a%20shortage,States%20may%20not%20get%20care. (last visited January 13, 2026).
[27] Banfield Pet Hospital, *75 million pets may not have access to veterinary care by 2030, New Banfield® study finds*, https://www.banfield.com/en/about-banfield/newsroom/press-releases/2020/75-million-pets-may-not-have-access-to-veterinary (last visited January 13, 2026).
[28] Lisa M. Weltzien Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, *THE LIVESTOCK VETERINARIAN SHORTAGE IMPLICATIONS FOR FOOD SAFETY AND SECURITY*, https://clf.jhsph.edu/sites/default/files/2023-06/the-livestock-veterinarian-shortage.pdf (last visited Jan. 20, 2026).
[29] Dana Zimmel, *Florida needs more veterinarians | Column*, Tampa Bay Times (January 3, 2022), https://www.tampabay.com/opinion/2022/01/03/florida-needs-more-veterinarians-column/ (last visited January 13, 2026).
[30] National Conference of State Legislatures, *Large Animal Veterinary Shortage*, https://www.ncsl.org/environment-and-natural-resources/large-animal-veterinary-shortage (last visited Jan. 20, 2026).

OTHER RESOURCES:

DBPR: Veterinary Medicine Board Information

USDA: Veterinary Shortage Situations Map

NCSL: Large Animal Veterinary Shortage

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Industries & Professional Activities Subcommittee	16 Y, 0 N	1/28/2026	Anstead	Thompson
Commerce Committee			Hamon	Thompson

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to veterinarian licensure by endorsement; amending s. 474.217, F.S.; revising requirements for licensure by endorsement as a veterinarian; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Subsection (1) of section 474.217, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

474.217 Licensure by endorsement.—

(1) The department shall issue a license by endorsement to any applicant who, upon applying to the department and remitting a fee set by the board, demonstrates to the board that she or he:

(a) Has demonstrated, in a manner designated by rule of the board, knowledge of the laws and rules governing the practice of veterinary medicine in this state; and

(b)1. Holds~~, and has held for the 3 years immediately preceding the application for licensure,~~ a valid, active license in good standing to practice veterinary medicine in another state of the United States, the District of Columbia, or a territory of the United States, provided that the applicant has successfully completed a state, regional, national, or other examination that is equivalent to or more stringent than the

CODING: Words ~~stricken~~ are deletions; words underlined are additions.

examination required by the board; or

2. Meets the qualifications of s. 474.207(2)(b) and has successfully completed a state, regional, national, or other examination which is equivalent to or more stringent than the examination given by the department and has passed the board's clinical competency examination or another clinical competency examination specified by rule of the board.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

PCS for CS/HB 881

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BILL ANALYSIS

This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

BILL #: PCS for CS/HB 881	**COMPANION BILL:** SB 1564 (DiCeglie)
TITLE: Pari-Mutuel Wagering	**LINKED BILLS:** None
SPONSOR(S):	**RELATED BILLS:** None

Committee References

Orig. Comm.: Commerce

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

The bill removes live racing requirements for thoroughbred permitholders under certain conditions, and allows certain thoroughbred permitholders that do not conduct live racing to retain the ability to continue to hold and/or apply for a slot machine and/or cardroom license. The bill revises requirements related to thoroughbred purses and certain agreements related to live racing. The bill creates a pathway for certain thoroughbred permitholders to operate racing at a licensed thoroughbred training center under certain conditions.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

The bill may have an indeterminate fiscal impact on state government and the private sector.

JUMP TO SUMMARY ANALYSIS RELEVANT INFORMATION BILL HISTORY

ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

Live Racing Requirements

The bill removes live racing requirements, under certain conditions, for certain thoroughbred permitholders. (Section 1)

The bill provides that a thoroughbred permitholder that does not conduct live racing:

- Retains its permit;
- Is a pari-mutuel facility;
- If such permitholder has been issued a slot machine license, the facility where such permit is located:
  - Remains an eligible slot machine facility;
  - Continues to be eligible for a slot machine license; and
  - Is exempt from thoroughbred horse racing purses and awards agreement requirements, and slot machine gaming area requirements;
- Is eligible, but not required, to be a guest track; and
- Remains eligible for a cardroom license. (Section 1)

The bill requires thoroughbred permitholders to give notice prior to ending live racing and to continue to offer a full schedule of live racing until the end of such notice period. The notice cannot be made prior to July 1, 2027, and the term of the notice must ensure that live racing continues for at least three (3) years after the date of the notice. Thus, the earliest date that a thoroughbred permitholder may elect to end live racing is July 1, 2030. (Section 1)

Escheated Thoroughbred Horse Permits

The bill removes the authority of the Florida Gaming Control Commission (Commission) to reissue escheated thoroughbred horse permits for failure of the permitholder to pay the required tax on handle for live performances. (Section 3)

Thoroughbred Purses and Awards

The bill requires purse supplements to be given to the owners of Florida-bred racehorses as breeders' awards, and given as stallion awards to be used to incentivize the ownership and the breeding of registered Florida-bred horses, and requires the awards to be given at a uniform rate pursuant to an annual plan developed by the Commission. The plan must be developed with input from the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS), the thoroughbred racing and breeding industry, and the public, and must be published in the Florida Register by January 1 for implementation during the next licensed racing year. (Section 5)

Permitholders must make payments for awards to the Commission to be deposited in the Pari-mutuel Wagering Trust Fund by the 5th day of each month, which will be made available for distribution according to the Commission's annual plan, as follows:

- .955% of pari-mutuel pools from wagering on race meets, including intertrack, interstate simulcast and Breeder's Cup races conducted outside the state.
- 3.475% of gross revenue from host tracks for live racing in this state that is broadcast out-of-state. (Section 5)

The bill sets standards for registering horses in order to be considered for certain breeder's awards and allows the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association to charge a fee of $75 for registration. The bill disqualifies stallions that are removed from the state for any period of time between February 1 and June 15 of any year from receiving a Florida stallion award. The bill provides exceptions for prescribed medical treatment. (Section 5)

Purses are required to be funded from pari-mutuel pools conducted by the permitholder and the bill provides for discipline by the Commission for failure to do so. A thoroughbred permitholder must pay as purses during its race meets an amount equal to 7.0 percent of all wagers placed as purses during its current race meet. (Section 5)

The bill requires the Commission, rather than the horsemen's association, to maintain complete records related to races conducted at thoroughbred tracks. The bill allows the Commission to adopt emergency rules for purposes of implementation. (Section 5)

The bill requires any funds in the possession of the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association related to payments from thoroughbred permitholders, or by DACS, to be paid to the Commission for deposit into the Pari-mutuel Wagering Trust Fund. (Section 5)

Horseracing, Minimum Purse Requirement, and Florida Breeders' and Owners' Awards

The bill repeals s. 550.2625, F.S., which governs the purse structure and the availability of breeder awards in horse racing meets in this state. (Section 6)

Limited Thoroughbred Racing Permits

For thoroughbred permitholders that hold a limited thoroughbred permit, the bill creates a pathway for such thoroughbred permitholders to operate racing at a licensed thoroughbred training center. The bill prohibits a training center from operating a cardroom. A permitholder operating a training center may not be issued a cardroom operating license unless such permitholder held a valid cardroom license before January 1, 2026. A training center may not operate a slot machine facility, and a permitholder operating the training center may not be issued a slot machine facility operating license. (Section 9)

The bill revises one of the designating authorities of the board of directors of the not-for-profit corporation that the holder of such permits is required to operate under to require the Commission to appoint four of the members instead of the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association. (Section 9)

Intertrack Wagering, Purses, Breeders' Awards

The bill repeals s. 550.625, F.S., which governs the purse amounts from intertrack wagering for certain host tracks. (Section 11)

Slot Machine Licensing
The bill removes live racing requirements and makes conforming changes for thoroughbred permitholders with a slot machine license. (Section 13)

Cardroom Licensing
The bill removes the requirement for live racing for thoroughbred permitholders with a cardroom license. Such permitholders are no longer required to conduct at least 90 percent of the live performances during the initial year of licensure. (Section 14)

Effective Date
The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2026. (Section 15)

RULEMAKING:

The bill allows the Commission to adopt emergency rules for purposes of implementation and exempts the Commission from making certain findings.

The bill authorizes the Commission to adopt rules for the licensing and oversight of thoroughbred training centers.

Lawmaking is a legislative power; however, the Legislature may delegate a portion of such power to executive branch agencies to create rules that have the force of law. To exercise this delegated power, an agency must have a grant of rulemaking authority and a law to implement.

FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

STATE GOVERNMENT:

The bill may have an insignificant impact on state government revenues. It is unknown how many thoroughbred permitholders will elect to terminate live racing.

PRIVATE SECTOR:

Individuals and businesses associated with thoroughbred horse racing will experience an indeterminate impact associated with the election by thoroughbred permitholders to conduct or not conduct live racing. Removing live race requirements for such permitholders may reduce certain expenditures related to these activities.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Gambling Overview
Gambling is generally prohibited in Florida, unless specifically authorized. Gambling is defined in Florida law as playing or engaging in any game at cards, keno, roulette, faro or other game of chance, at any place, by any device whatever, for money or other thing of value.[1] The standard jury instructions for criminal cases in Florida provide that in order to prove the crime of gambling, the state must prove the following three elements beyond a reasonable doubt:[2]

- Playing or engaging in a game of chance.
- Risking money or property on the outcome of the game.
- Expecting to gain or lose money or property as a result of the game.

Gambling in Florida is highly regulated, and wagers on games that are not specifically authorized by law are considered illegal.

[1] S. 849.08, F.S.
[2] The Florida Bar, *Criminal Jury Instructions Chapter 22, 22.1 Gambling*, https://www.floridabar.org/rules/florida-standard-jury-instructions/criminal-jury-instructions-home/criminal-jury-instructions/sji-criminal-chapter-22/ (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).

Section 7, Art. X, of the Florida Constitution prohibits lotteries, other than pari-mutuel pools, from being conducted in Florida.

Slot machines that are not operated by a licensed pari-mutuel facility or in accordance with a tribal compact or specific law are illegal in Florida.

Chapter 849, F.S., includes prohibitions against slot machines, keeping a gambling house, engaging in bookmaking, and running a lottery. However, a constitutional amendment approved by voters in 1986 authorized state-operated lotteries, and a constitutional amendment in 2004 authorized slot machines in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties.

The following gaming activities are also authorized by law and regulated by the state:

- Pari-mutuel[3] wagering;[4]
- Gaming on tribal reservations in accordance with the federal Indian Gaming Regulatory Act and the 2021 Gaming Compact with the Seminole Tribe of Florida;
- Slot machine gaming at certain licensed pari-mutuel locations in Miami-Dade County and Broward County;[5] and
- Cardrooms[6] at certain pari-mutuel facilities.

Under the Florida Contraband Forfeiture Act,[7] gambling proceeds, paraphernalia, and property may be seized as contraband. For example, a vehicle used for transporting an illegal slot machine is subject to seizure.[8]

Chapter 849, F.S., also authorizes, under specific and limited conditions, the conduct of penny-ante games,[9] bingo,[10] charitable drawings,[11] game promotions (sweepstakes),[12] bowling tournaments,[13] and skill-based amusement games and machines at specified locations.[14]

Pari-mutuel Wagering Permitting and Licensure

The Florida Pari-mutuel Wagering Act (Act)[15] provides specific permitting and licensing requirements for the conduct of the pari-mutuel industry.[16] Pari-mutuel wagering activities are limited to operators who have received a permit from the Division, which is then subject to ratification by county referendum.[17] Permitholders apply for an operating license annually to conduct pari-mutuel wagering activities.[18] Certain permitholders are also authorized to operate cardrooms[19] and slot machines at their facility.[20]

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[3] "Pari-mutuel" is defined in Florida law as "a system of betting on races or games in which the winners divide the total amount bet, after deducting management expenses and taxes, in proportion to the sums they have wagered individually and with regard to the odds assigned to particular outcomes. *See* s. 550.002(22), F.S.
[4] *See* ch. 550, F.S., relating to the regulation of pari-mutuel activities.
[5] *See* FLA. CONST., art. X, s. 23, and ch. 551, F.S.
[6] S. 849.086(2)(c), F.S., defines "cardroom" to mean "a facility where authorized card games are played for money or anything of value and to which the public is invited to participate in such games and charged a fee for participation by the operator of such facility."
[7] Ss. 932.701-932.706, F.S., comprise the Florida Contraband Forfeiture Act.
[8] S. 849.36, F.S.
[9] S. 849.085, F.S.
[10] S. 849.0931, F.S.
[11] S. 849.0935, F.S.
[12] S. 849.094, F.S., authorizes game promotions in connection with the sale of consumer products or services.
[13] S. 849.141, F.S.
[14] S. 546.10, F.S.
[15] Ch. 550, F.S.
[16] S. 550.054(1), F.S.
[17] S. 550.054(2), F.S.
[18] S. 550.0115, F.S.
[19] S. 849.086, F.S.
[20] S. 551.104, F.S.

The Act generally requires that any transfer or assignment of a permit receive prior approval[21] by the Commission, which must determine the eligibility[22] of persons and entities to hold a permit. Similarly, if a permit is held by a corporation or business entity other than an individual, the transfer of ten percent or more of the stock or other evidence of ownership or equity in the permitholder may not be made without the prior approval of the transferee by the Commission.[23]

The Act restricts pari-mutuel permitholders **from being issued an operating license** to conduct pari-mutuel wagering, slot machine gaming, or the operation of a cardroom if the permitholder did not hold an operating license for the conduct of pari-mutuel wagering for Fiscal Year 2020-2021.[24]

The Act restricts pari-mutuel permitholders **from holding a permit** to conduct pari-mutuel wagering and associated cardroom or slot machine licenses[25] unless the permitholder, other than a limited thoroughbred permitholder, held an operating license for the conduct of pari-mutuel wagering for Fiscal year 2020-2021.[26]

The Act specifies that permits held on January 1, 2021 are deemed valid,[27] but new permits for pari-mutuel wagering may not be approved or issued.[28]

The Commission is required to revoke the permit of any permitholder, other than a limited thoroughbred permitholder, who did not hold an operating license for the conduct of pari-mutuel wagering for fiscal year 2020-2021. A permit revoked under this provision is void and may not be reissued.[29]

Live Racing Requirements

Currently, only thoroughbred permitholders are required to conduct live racing in order to operate other PMW activities.[30] For example, in order to hold a cardroom license, thoroughbred permitholders are required to run a certain number of live races each year.

The Act defines "full schedule of live racing or games" as follows:[31]

- **Jai alai permitholders**: the conduct of a combination of at least 100 live evening or matinee performances during the preceding year;
- **Converted permitholders**: the conduct of a combination of at least 100 live evening and matinee wagering performances during either of the 2 preceding years;
- **Jai alai permitholder who does not operate slot machines**: who has conducted at least 100 live performances per year for at least 10 years after December 31, 1992, and whose handle on live jai alai games conducted at its pari-mutuel facility has been less than $4 million per state fiscal year for at least 2 consecutive years after June 30, 1992, the conduct of a combination of at least 40 live evening or matinee performances during the preceding year;
- **Jai alai permitholder who operates slot machines**: the conduct of a combination of at least 150 performances during the preceding year;
- **Harness permitholder**: the conduct of at least 100 live regular wagering performances during the preceding year;

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[21] There is one exception to the prior-approval requirement in s. 550.054(11)(a), F.S., which is that the holder of a permit converted to a jai alai permit "may lease or build anywhere within the county in which its permit is located." As of 2021, such conversions are prohibited. *See* s. 550.054(15)(d), F.S.
[22] *See* s. 550.1815, F.S.
[23] S. 550.054(11)(b), F.S.
[24] S. 550.01215(1)(d), F.S.
[25] Under s. 551.114(4), F.S., designated slot machine gaming areas must be located at the address specified in the licensed permitholder's slot machine license issued for Fiscal Year 2020-2021.
[26] S. 550.054(15)(a), F.S.
[27] S. 550.054(15)(b), F.S.
[28] S. 550.054(15)(c), F.S.
[29] S. 550.054(9)(c), F.S.
[30] S. 550.01215(1)(b), F.S.
[31] S. 550.002(10), F.S.

- **Quarter horse permitholder at its facility**: unless an alternative schedule of at least 20 live regular wagering performances is agreed upon by the permitholder and either the Florida Quarter Horse Racing Association or the horsemen's association representing the majority of the quarter horse owners and trainers at the facility and filed with the commission along with its annual date application, in the 2010-2011 fiscal year, the conduct of at least 20 regular wagering performances, in the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 fiscal years, the conduct of at least 30 live regular wagering performances, and for every fiscal year after the 2012-2013 fiscal year, the conduct of at least 40 live regular wagering performances;
- **Quarter horse permitholder leasing another licensed racetrack**: the conduct of 160 events at the leased facility; and for a thoroughbred permitholder, the conduct of at least 40 live regular wagering performances during the preceding year.

Greyhound permitholders are prohibited from conducting live racing.

Jai alai permitholders, harness horse racing permitholders, and quarter horse racing permitholders have the option to conduct live racing or games but are not required to do so.[32]

A greyhound permitholder, jai alai permitholder, harness horse racing permitholder, or quarter horse racing permitholder that does not conduct live racing or games:[33]

- Retains its permit;
- Is a pari-mutuel facility as defined in s. 550.002(23), F.S.;
- Is eligible, but not required, to be a guest track, and if the permitholder is a harness horse racing permitholder, is eligible to be a host track for purposes of intertrack wagering and simulcasting pursuant to ss. 550.3551, 550.615, 550.625, and 550.6305, F.S.;
- Remains eligible for a cardroom license; and
- If previously issued a slot machine license, remains eligible for such license.

Pari-mutuel Wagering Permitting and Licensure

The Florida Pari-mutuel Wagering Act (Act)[34] provides specific permitting and licensing requirements for the pari-mutuel industry.[35] Permitholders apply for an operating license annually to conduct pari-mutuel wagering activities.[36] Certain permitholders are also authorized to operate cardrooms[37] and slot machines at their facility.[38]

Currently, there are three pari-mutuel operating licenses that were issued for fiscal year 2025-2026 to conduct live thoroughbred racing performances. These licenses and their locations include:[39]

- **Gulfstream Park Racing Association** Inc., operates at Gulfstream Park in Broward County.
- **Gulfstream Park Thoroughbred After Racing Program**, Inc., operates at Gulfstream Park in Broward County.
- **Tampa Bay Downs**, Inc., operates at Tampa Bay Downs in Hillsborough County.

Slot Machine Licensing

In order to apply to conduct slot machine gaming a permitholder must first obtain permission from the voters of the county where the applicant's facility is located by referendum as specified in s. 23, Art. X of the State Constitution.[40] Currently, slot machines are only authorized in eight licensed PMW facilities[41] located in Miami-

[32] S. 550.01215(1)(b)1., F.S.
[33] *Id.*
[34] *See* ch. 550, F.S.
[35] S. 550.054(1), F.S.
[36] S. 550.0115, F.S.
[37] S. 849.086, F.S.
[38] S. 551.104, F.S.
[39] Florida Gaming Control Commission, *Tracks and Frontons*, https://flgaming.gov/pmw/tracks-frontons/ (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).
[40] S. 551.104(2), F.S.
[41] S. 551.104(3), F.S.

Dade and Broward counties, and are also authorized by Compact on the Seminole Tribe of Florida's tribal property.[42]

Thoroughbred permitholders are required to conduct a full schedule of live racing, as defined in s. 550.002(10), F.S., in order to maintain their slot machine license.[43]

Cardroom Licensing

On order to apply for a cardroom license an applicant must first obtain a majority vote of the governing body of the municipality or county the facility is located in.[44]

Municipalities are authorized to prohibit the establishment of a cardroom on or after July 1, 2021, within their jurisdiction. This does not apply to a licensed pari-mutuel permitholder who held an operating license for the conduct of pari-mutuel wagering for fiscal year 2020-2021 in the municipality's jurisdiction or to a cardroom that was previously approved by the municipality.[45]

A cardroom license may only be issued to a licensed pari-mutuel wagering permitholder, and operated at the same facility at which the permitholder is authorized to conduct pari-mutuel wagering activities.[46]

A pari-mutuel permitholder, other than a converted quarter horse to thoroughbred permitholder or a purchaser, transferee, or assignee holding a valid permit for the conduct of pari-mutuel wagering, may not be issued a license for the operation of a cardroom if the permitholder did not hold an operating license for the conduct of pari-mutuel wagering for fiscal year 2020-2021.[47]

In order for an initial cardroom license to be issued to a converted quarter horse to thoroughbred permitholder, the applicant must have requested, as part of its pari-mutuel annual license application, to conduct at least a full schedule of live racing.[48]

Currently, in order for a cardroom license to be renewed by a thoroughbred permitholder, it must conduct at least 90 percent of the total number of live performances conducted by such permitholder during either the state fiscal year in which its initial cardroom license was issued or the state fiscal year immediately prior thereto if the permitholder ran at least a full schedule of live racing or games in the prior year.[49]

Thoroughbred Purses and Awards

A slot machine license may not be issued, or renewed, to an applicant holding a permit to conduct pari-mutuel wagering meets of thoroughbred racing unless the applicant has on file with the Commission a binding written agreement between the applicant and the:[50]

- Florida Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association, Inc., governing the payment of purses on live thoroughbred races conducted at the licensee's pari-mutuel facility.
- Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association, Inc., governing the payment of breeders', stallion, and special racing awards on live thoroughbred races conducted at the licensee's pari-mutuel facility.

The agreements may direct the payment of such purses and awards from revenues generated by any wagering or gaming the applicant is authorized to conduct under Florida law. All purses and awards are subject to the terms of chapter 550, F.S. All sums for breeders', stallion, and special racing awards are remitted monthly to the Florida

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[42] S. 551.101, F.S.
[43] S. 551.104(4)(c), F.S.
[44] S. 849.086(16)(a), F.S.
[45] *S.* 849.086(16)(b), F.S.
[46] S. 849.086(5)(a), F.S.
[47] S. 849.086(5)(c), F.S.
[48] *Id.*
[49] *Id.*
[50] S. 551.104(10)(a)1., F.S.

Thoroughbred Breeders' Association, Inc., for the payment of awards subject to the administrative fee authorized in s. 550.2625(3), F.S.[51]

"Purse" means the cash portion of the prize for which a race or game is contested.[52] "Breeders' and stallions' awards" means financial incentives paid to encourage the agricultural industry to breeding racehorses in this state.[53]

Current law provides that "the purse structure and the availability of breeder awards are important factors in attracting the entry of well-bred horses in racing meets in this state which in turn helps to produce maximum racing revenues for the state and the counties."[54] Each permitholder conducting a horserace meet is required to pay from the takeout withheld on pari-mutuel pools a sum for purses in accordance with the type of race performed.[55] Each horseracing permitholder conducting any thoroughbred race is required to pay a sum on all pari-mutuel pools conducted during any such race for the payment of breeders', stallion, or special racing awards.[56]

Escheated Thoroughbred Horse Permits

Currently, the tax on handle for thoroughbred horserace performances is 0.5 percent of handle per performance.[57] The permit of a thoroughbred permitholder who is conducting thoroughbred performances and who does not pay tax on handle for any such performances conducted during any 2 consecutive state fiscal years is void and may not be reissued unless such failure to operate and pay tax on handle was the direct result of fire, strike, war, hurricane, pandemic, or other disaster or event beyond the ability of the permitholder to control. Financial hardship does not constitute just cause for failure to operate and pay tax on handle.[58]

The Commission is authorized to reissue an escheated thoroughbred horse permit to a qualified applicant for the issuance of an initial permit without having to satisfy the referendum requirements for a pari-mutuel permit. As specified in the application and upon approval by the Commission, the new permitholder is authorized to operate a thoroughbred horse facility anywhere in the same county in which the escheated permit was authorized to be operated, notwithstanding the provisions of s. 550.054(2), F.S., relating to mileage limitations.[59]

Limited Thoroughbred Racing Permits

Currently, a holder of a quarter horse racing permit may, within 1 year after the effective date of this law, which became effective in 2009, apply to the Commission for a transfer of the quarter horse racing permit to a not-for-profit corporation, designated by the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association, to request that the Commission convert the quarter horse racing permit to a permit authorizing the holder to conduct thoroughbred racing.[60]

The quarter horse racing permit nor its conversion to a limited thoroughbred permit are subject to the mileage limitation or the ratification election as set forth under s. 550.054(2) or s. 550.0651, F.S. After the conversion issuance of the initial license to conduct thoroughbred racing, the not-for-profit corporation is required to annually apply to the Commission for a thoroughbred racing license.[61]

Racing under the permit may take place only at the location for which the original quarter horse racing permit was issued, which may be leased by the not-for-profit corporation for that purpose; however, the not-for-profit corporation may, without the conduct of any ratification election pursuant to s. 550.054(13) or s. 550.0651, F.S.,

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[51] *Id.*
[52] S. 550.002(28), F.S.
[53] S. 550.002(2), F.S.
[54] S. 550.2625(1), F.S.
[55] *See* s. 550.2625(2)(a), F.S.
[56] *See* s. 550.2625(3), F.S.
[57] S. 550.09515(2)(a), F.S.
[58] S. 550.09515(3)(a), F.S.
[59] S. 550.09515(3)(b), F.S.
[60] S. 550.3345(1), F.S.
[61] S. 550.3345(2), F.S.

move the location of the permit to another location in the same county provided that such relocation is approved under the zoning and land use regulations of the applicable county or municipality.[62]

A converted permit and a license issued to the not-for-profit corporation under chapter 849 are not eligible for transfer to another person or entity.[63]

Unless otherwise provided, after conversion, the permit and the not-for-profit corporation are treated under the laws of this state as a thoroughbred permit and as a thoroughbred permitholder, respectively, with the exception of certain tax on handle and intertrack wagering requirements in ss. 550.09515(3) and 550.6308, F.S.[64]

Intertrack Wagering, Purses, Breeders' Awards

Currently, a host track racing under either a thoroughbred or quarter horse permit is required to pay an amount equal to 7.0 percent of all wagers placed pursuant to intertrack wagering, as purses during its current race meet. However, up to 0.50 percent of these wagers placed may, at the option of the host track, be deducted from the amount retained by the host track for purses to supplement the awards program for owners of Florida-bred horses.[65]

A host track racing under a harness permit is required to pay an amount equal to 7 percent of all wagers placed pursuant to intertrack wagering as purses during its current race meet. If a host track underpays or overpays purses, the provisions of s. 550.2625, F.S., apply to the overpayment or underpayment.[66]

Of all wagers placed pursuant to intertrack wagering, if the host track is:[67]

- A thoroughbred track, an amount equal to 0.75 percent is paid to the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association, Inc., for the payment of breeders' awards;
- A harness track, an amount equal to 1 percent is paid to the Florida Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association, Inc., for the payment of breeders' awards, stallion awards, stallion stakes, additional purses, and prizes for, and the general promotion of owning and breeding, Florida-bred standardbred horses; or
- A quarter horse track, an amount equal to 1 percent is paid to the Florida Quarter Horse Breeders and Owners Association, Inc., for the payment of breeders' awards and general promotion.

The law also provides certain requirements for payment to a breeders' organization with regard to any other amounts received by the respective breeders' and owners' associations as so designated.[68]

DACS Distribution of Funds for Florida Thoroughbred Breeding and Racing

Current law relating to the promotion of Florida thoroughbred breeding and racing at Florida thoroughbred tracks, outlines the distribution of funds to encourage these activities. The law encourages the agricultural activity of breeding thoroughbred racehorses in Florida and thoroughbred racing at Florida tracks.[69]

DACS is responsible for distributing funds from the Florida Agricultural Promotional Campaign Trust Fund to achieve these goals. The law provides:[70]

- Purses or purse supplements for Florida-bred or Florida-sired horses registered with the association that participate in Florida thoroughbred races.
- Stallion Awards to the owners of thoroughbred stallions appropriately registered with the association and siring association for registered Florida-breds that finish first in a listed stakes race at a Florida thoroughbred track.

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[62] S. 550.3345(2)(d), F.S.
[63] S. 550.3345(2)(e), F.S.
[64] S. 550.3345(3), F.S.
[65] S. 550.625(1), F.S.
[66] *Id.*
[67] S. 550.625(2), F.S.
[68] S. 550.625(3), F.S.
[69] *See* s. 571.265, F.S.
[70] S. 571.265(3), F.S.

Recipients of such funds must submit a report to DACS detailing how all funds were used in the prior fiscal year.[71]

RECENT LEGISLATION:

YEAR	BILL #	HOUSE SPONSOR(S)	SENATE SPONSOR	OTHE INFORMA
2021A	CS/CS/HB 7A - Gaming	Latvala, Robinson, W./ *Hutson*	The bill became law on May 25, 2021.	
2025	CS/HB 1467 - Gambling	Snyder, Anderson/ *Burgess*	The bill passed the House, but died in the Senate.	

OTHER RESOURCES:

Florida Gaming Control Commission

Florida Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association

Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' and Owners' Association

Gulfstream Park

Tampa Bay Downs

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Orig. Comm.: Commerce Committee			Hamon	Thompson

[71] S. 571.265(4), F.S.

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to pari-mutuel wagering; amending s. 550.01215, F.S.; authorizing thoroughbred permitholders to elect not to conduct live racing or games; specifying that such permitholders retain certain permits, eligibility, exemptions, and licenses; providing that certain permitholders are eligible to be a guest track; requiring certain thoroughbred permitholders to continue to offer live racing until providing a specific notification to the commission; providing notice requirements; providing applicability; amending s. 550.0351, F.S.; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; amending s. 550.09515, F.S.; prohibiting reissuance of horse permits to certain permitholders who do not pay tax on handle for live races for a specified period; removing provisions requiring reissuance of escheated horse permits; amending s. 550.2614, F.S.; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; amending s. 550.26165, F.S.; providing legislative purpose; requiring certain moneys to be used for a specified purpose; requiring awards be given at a uniform rate pursuant to a specified plan; requiring such plan be published in the Florida Administrative Register by a date certain; authorizing the commission to use

flexibility in the development and implementation of a certain program; providing the source of amounts available for distribution; requiring permitholders to make certain payments by a specified date; revising thoroughbred breeders' awards; providing eligibility requirements for awards; requiring a specified association to maintain certain records; authorizing such association to require a fee for specified services; requiring purses be funded in a specified manner and paid at a specified rate; requiring awards to be paid by a certain time; requiring the Florida Gaming Control Commission maintain certain records; requiring a certain association to immediately remit specified funds to the state; requiring such funds to be placed in a specified account; authorizing awards to be paid for races in other states or countries; requiring the commission to adopt certain rules; providing underpayment requirements for permitholders; authorizing the commission to adopt emergency rules; repealing s. 550.2625, F.S., relating to Horseracing, minimum purse requirement, Florida breeders' and owners' awards; amending ss. 550.2633 and 550.26352, F.S.; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; amending s. 550.3345, F.S.; revising the composition of a certain board of directors; revising

provisions relating to the conversion of quarter horse permits to a limited thoroughbred permit; authorizing such permit locations to be moved to a licensed thoroughbred training center that meets certain requirements; providing for the licensing of thoroughbred training centers; prohibiting such centers from being issued certain licenses; providing an exception; authorizing the commission to adopt rules for such licensing and oversight; providing for board membership of the not-for-profit corporation; providing legislative findings; preempting certain local laws, charters, ordinances, resolutions, regulations, policies, initiatives, or referendums; providing application; amending s. 550.3551, F.S.; revising the entity responsible for approving changes to live racing minimums; repealing s. 550.625, F.S., relating to intertrack wagering, purses, and breeders' awards; amending s. 550.6305, F.S.; revising the entity to be paid certain breeders' awards; amending s. 551.104, F.S.; revising specified requirements for thoroughbred permitholders who have certain slot machine licenses; amending s. 849.086, F.S.; revising requirements for certain permitholders who have cardroom licenses; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 550.01215, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

550.01215 License application; periods of operation; license fees; bond.—

(1) Each permitholder shall annually, during the period between January 15 and February 4, file in writing with the commission its application for an operating license for a pari-mutuel facility for the conduct of pari-mutuel wagering during the next state fiscal year, including intertrack and simulcast race wagering. Each application for live performances must specify the number, dates, and starting times of all live performances that the permitholder intends to conduct. It must also specify which performances will be conducted as charity or scholarship performances.

(b)1. A greyhound permitholder may not conduct live racing. A jai alai permitholder, thoroughbred permitholder, harness horse racing permitholder, or quarter horse racing permitholder may elect not to conduct live racing or games. ~~A thoroughbred permitholder must conduct live racing.~~ A greyhound permitholder, jai alai permitholder, thoroughbred permitholder, harness horse racing permitholder, or quarter horse racing permitholder that does not conduct live racing or games retains its permit; is a pari-mutuel facility as defined in s. 550.002(23); if such permitholder has been issued a slot machine

license, the facility where such permit is located remains an eligible facility as defined in s. 551.102(4), continues to be eligible for a slot machine license pursuant to s. 551.104(3), and is exempt from ss. 551.104(10) ~~ss. 551.104(4)(c) and (10)~~ and 551.114(2); is eligible, but not required, to be a guest track and, if the permitholder is a harness horse racing permitholder or a thoroughbred permitholder, to be a host track for purposes of intertrack wagering and simulcasting pursuant to ss. 550.3551, 550.615, ~~550.625,~~ and 550.6305; and remains eligible for a cardroom license. A thoroughbred permitholder who operates a slot machine facility or cardroom shall offer a full schedule of live racing until such permitholder notifies the commission that it will no longer offer live racing. Notice under this subparagraph is not valid unless it is delivered on or after July 1, 2027, and contains the date on which the permitholder will no longer offer live racing, which may not be earlier than 3 years after the date of the notice. The permitholder is not required to deliver such notice when relocating under s. 550.3345.

2. A permitholder or licensee may not conduct live greyhound racing or dogracing in connection with any wager for money or any other thing of value in the state. The commission may deny, suspend, or revoke any permit or license under this chapter if a permitholder or licensee conducts live greyhound racing or dogracing in violation of this subparagraph. In

addition to, or in lieu of, denial, suspension, or revocation of such permit or license, the commission may impose a civil penalty of up to $5,000 against the permitholder or licensee for a violation of this subparagraph. All penalties imposed and collected must be deposited with the Chief Financial Officer to the credit of the General Revenue Fund.

Section 2. Subsection (4) of section 550.0351, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

550.0351 Charity days.—

(4) The total of all profits derived from the conduct of a charity day performance must include all revenues derived from the conduct of that performance, including all state taxes that would otherwise be due to the state, except that the daily license fee as provided in s. 550.0951(1) and the breaks for the promotional trust funds ~~as provided in s. 550.2625(3), (4), (5), (7), and (8)~~ shall be paid to the commission. All other revenues from the charity performance, including the commissions, breaks, and admissions and the revenues from parking, programs, and concessions, shall be included in the total of all profits.

Section 3. Subsection (3) of section 550.09515, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

550.09515 Thoroughbred horse taxes; abandoned interest in a permit for nonpayment of taxes.—

(3)~~(a)~~ The permit of a thoroughbred horse permitholder who is conducting live thoroughbred horse performances and who does

not pay tax on handle for live thoroughbred horse performances for a full schedule of live races during any 2 consecutive state fiscal years shall be void and shall not be reissued ~~escheat to and become the property of the state~~ unless such failure to operate and pay tax on handle was the direct result of fire, strike, war, or other disaster or event beyond the ability of the permitholder to control. Financial hardship to the permitholder shall not, in and of itself, constitute just cause for failure to operate and pay tax on handle.

~~(b) In order to maximize the tax revenues to the state, the commission shall reissue an escheated thoroughbred horse permit to a qualified applicant pursuant to the provisions of this chapter as for the issuance of an initial permit. However, the provisions of this chapter relating to referendum requirements for a pari-mutuel permit shall not apply to the reissuance of an escheated thoroughbred horse permit. As specified in the application and upon approval by the commission of an application for the permit, the new permitholder shall be authorized to operate a thoroughbred horse facility anywhere in the same county in which the escheated permit was authorized to be operated, notwithstanding the provisions of s. 550.054(2) relating to mileage limitations.~~

Section 4. Subsection (1) of section 550.2614, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

550.2614 Distribution of certain funds to a horsemen's

association.—

(1) Each licensee that holds a permit for thoroughbred horse racing in this state shall deduct from the purses ~~required by s. 550.2625~~, an amount of money equal to 1 percent of the total purse pool and shall pay that amount to a horsemen's association representing the majority of the thoroughbred racehorse owners and trainers for its use in accordance with the stated goals of its articles of association filed with the Department of State.

Section 5. Section 550.26165, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

(Substantial rewording of section.
See s. 550.26165, F.S., for present text.)

550.26165 Breeders' incentives, purses, and special racing awards plan.—

(1) A purse structure for racehorse owners which is competitive with the purses offered in other states is an important factor in attracting the entry of well-bred horses in race meets in this state. The availability of awards to the owners and the breeders of Florida-bred racehorses, including the owners of Florida-based stallions, is an important factor used to incentivize the purchase of Florida-bred horses at auction and to induce well-bred stallions and mares to engage in breeding activities in the state. In turn, the availability of these financial awards help to ensure the continuing viability

of the thoroughbred industry in the state while simultaneously producing maximum revenues from licensed racing activity for the state and the counties. The purpose of this section is to encourage the agricultural activity of owning, breeding, and racing Florida-bred racehorses.

(2) Moneys dedicated in this chapter for use as purse supplements to the owners of Florida-bred racehorses as breeders' awards and stallion awards are to be used to incentivize the ownership and the breeding of registered Florida-bred horses. Such awards shall be given at a uniform rate pursuant to an annual plan developed by the commission. The annual plan shall be developed with input from the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, stakeholders in the thoroughbred racing and breeding industry, and the general public and published in the Florida Administrative Register by January 1 for implementation during the next licensed racing year. The awards programs described in this chapter must be responsive to rapidly changing incentive programs in other states and to accomplish this goal, the commission is authorized to use flexibility in the design and implementation of a competitive awards programs. The plan approved by the commission shall allocate, for distribution by category, breeders' awards, stallion awards, and Florida-bred purse supplements available for distribution in the ensuing licensing year. The amount available for distribution shall be derived from the following

sources:

(a) A minimum amount equal to 0.955 percent on all pari-mutuel pools conducted on all wagering during each race meet, including any intertrack race taken pursuant to ss. 550.615-550.6305 or any interstate simulcast taken pursuant to s. 550.3551(3). This paragraph also applies to all Breeder's Cup races conducted outside this state taken pursuant to s. 550.3551(3).

(b) A minimum amount equal to 3.475 percent of the gross revenue derived by the thoroughbred permitholder when serving as the host track for wagering on any race originating live in this state which is broadcast out-of-state to any location at which wagers are accepted pursuant to s. 550.3551(2).

The permitholder conducting the races shall make the payments authorized in this section to the commission for deposit into the Pari-mutuel Wagering Trust Fund. The permitholder shall remit to the commission such payments by the 5th day of each calendar month for such sums accruing during the preceding calendar month and provide any corresponding reporting as prescribed by the commission. Such payments together with any interest earned shall be used exclusively for the payment of breeders', stallion, or special racing awards in accordance with the plan established pursuant to this section.

(3) In order for a breeder of a Florida-bred thoroughbred

horse to be eligible to receive a breeder's award, the horse must have been registered as a Florida-bred horse with the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association and the Jockey Club certificate for the horse must show that the horse has been duly registered as a Florida-bred horse. The Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association may charge the registrant a reasonable fee for this verification and registration not to exceed $75 per horse.

(4) In order for an owner of the sire of a thoroughbred horse winning a stakes race to be eligible to receive a stallion award, the stallion must have been registered with the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association and the live breeding of the registered Florida-bred horse must have occurred in this state. The stallion must be standing permanently in this state between February 1 and June 15 of each year or, if the stallion is dead, must have stood permanently in this state for a period of at least 1 year immediately before its death. The removal of a stallion from this state during the period of time between February 1 and June 15 of any year for any reason other than exclusively for prescribed medical treatment, as approved by the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association, renders the owner or owners of the stallion ineligible to receive a stallion award under any circumstances for offspring sired before removal; however, if a removed stallion is returned to this state, all offspring sired subsequent to the return make the owner or

owners of the stallion eligible for the stallion award but only for those offspring sired subsequent to such return to this state. The Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association shall maintain complete records showing the date the stallion arrived in this state for the first time, whether or not the stallion remained in the state permanently, the location of the stallion, and whether the stallion is still standing in this state and complete records showing awards earned, received, and distributed. The Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association may charge the stallion owner a reasonable fee for this service not to exceed $75 per stallion.

(5) Purses shall be funded from the pari-mutuel pools conducted by the permitholder. A thoroughbred permit shall pay as purses during its race meets an amount equal to 7 percent of all wagers placed pursuant to s. 550.615 as purses during its current race meet.

(6) A permitholder conducting a thoroughbred horse race under this chapter shall, within 30 days after the end of the race meet during which the race is conducted, certify to the commission such information relating to the thoroughbred horses winning a stakes or other horserace at the meet as may be required to determine the eligibility for payment of breeders', stallion, and special racing awards.

(7) The commission shall maintain complete records showing the starters and winners in all races conducted at thoroughbred

tracks in this state and shall maintain complete records showing awards earned, received, and distributed.

(8) Any funds in the possession of the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association which had been paid by any thoroughbred permitholder as required by any provision of chapter 550 or chapter 551 in effect when the payment was made or by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services as required by any provision of chapter 571 in effect when the payment was made shall be immediately paid to the commission for deposit to the Pari-mutuel Wagering Trust Fund. The commission shall authorize payment from such funds to any breeder or stallion owner entitled to an award that has not been previously paid by the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association in accordance with the applicable plan of distribution.

(9) Breeders' awards or stallion awards authorized under this chapter, if authorized by a rule of the commission, may be paid with respect to thoroughbred horse races taking place in other states or countries.

(10) The commission shall adopt reasonable rules to ensure the timely and accurate payment of all amounts withheld by horserace permitholders regarding the distribution of purses, owners' awards, and other amounts collected for payment to owners and breeders pursuant to this section and this chapter.

(11) Each permitholder that fails to pay out all moneys

collected for payment to owners and breeders shall, within 10 days after the end of the meet during which the permitholder underpaid purses, deposit an amount equal to the underpayment into a separate interest-bearing account established by the commission, which moneys shall be distributed to owners and breeders in accordance with commission rules.

(12) The commission may at any time adopt emergency rules pursuant to s. 120.54 to implement this section. The Legislature finds that such emergency rulemaking power is necessary for the preservation of the rights and welfare of the people in order to provide additional funds to benefit the statewide thoroughbred racing and breeding industry. The Legislature further finds that the unique nature of breeding and racing operations require, from time to time, that the commission respond as quickly as is practicable to changes in the marketplace. Therefore, in adopting such emergency rules, the commission need not make the findings required by s. 120.54(4)(a). Emergency rules adopted under this section are exempt from s. 120.54(4)(c) and shall remain in effect until replaced by other emergency rules or by rules adopted under the nonemergency rulemaking procedures of the Administrative Procedure Act.

Section 6. Section 550.2625, Florida Statutes, is repealed.

Section 7. Subsection (2) of section 550.2633, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

550.2633 Horseracing; distribution of abandoned interest in or contributions to pari-mutuel pools.—

(2) All moneys or other property which has escheated to and become the property of the state as provided herein and which is held by a permitholder authorized to conduct pari-mutuel pools in this state shall be paid annually by the permitholder to the recipient designated in this subsection within 60 days after the close of the race meeting of the permitholder. Section 550.1645 notwithstanding, the moneys shall be paid by the permitholder as follows:

(a) Funds from any harness horse races shall be paid to the Florida Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association and shall be used for the payment of breeders' awards, stallion awards, stallion stakes, additional purses, and prizes for, and for the general promotion of owning and breeding of, Florida-bred standardbred horses~~, as provided for in s. 550.2625~~.

(b) Funds from quarter horse races shall be paid to the Florida Quarter Horse Breeders and Owners Association and shall be allocated solely for supplementing and augmenting purses and prizes and for the general promotion of owning and breeding of racing quarter horses in this state~~, as provided for in s. 550.2625~~.

Section 8. Subsection (7) of section 550.26352, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

550.26352 Breeders' Cup Meet; pools authorized; conflicts;

taxes; credits; transmission of races; rules; application.—

(7) The permitholder conducting the Breeders' Cup Meet shall be exempt from the payment of purses and other payments to horsemen on all on-track, intertrack, interstate, and international wagers or rights fees or payments arising therefrom for all races for which the purse is paid or supplied by Breeders' Cup Limited. The permitholder conducting the Breeders' Cup Meet shall not, however, be exempt from breeders' awards payments for on-track and intertrack wagers ~~as provided in ss. 550.2625(3) and 550.625(2)(a)~~ for races in which the purse is paid or supplied by Breeders' Cup Limited.

Section 9. Subsection (2) of section 550.3345, Florida Statutes, is amended, and subsections (4) and (5) are added to that section, to read:

550.3345 Conversion of quarter horse permit to a limited thoroughbred permit.—

(2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the holder of a quarter horse racing permit issued under s. 550.334 may, within 1 year after the effective date of this section, apply to the commission for a transfer of the quarter horse racing permit to a not-for-profit corporation formed under state law to serve the purposes of the state as provided in subsection (1). The board of directors of the not-for-profit corporation must be comprised of 11 members, 4 of whom shall be designated by the applicant, 4 of whom shall be designated by the commission

~~Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association~~, and 3 of whom shall be designated by the other 8 directors, with at least 1 of these 3 members being an authorized representative of another thoroughbred permitholder in this state. The not-for-profit corporation shall submit an application to the commission for review and approval of the transfer in accordance with s. 550.054. Upon approval of the transfer by the commission, and notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the not-for-profit corporation may, within 1 year after its receipt of the permit, request that the commission convert the quarter horse racing permit to a permit authorizing the holder to conduct pari-mutuel wagering meets of thoroughbred racing. Neither the transfer of the quarter horse racing permit nor its conversion to a limited thoroughbred permit shall be subject to the mileage limitation or the ratification election as set forth under s. 550.054(2) or s. 550.0651. Upon receipt of the request for such conversion, the commission shall timely issue a converted permit. The converted permit and the not-for-profit corporation shall be subject to the following requirements:

(a) All net revenues derived by the not-for-profit corporation under the thoroughbred horse racing permit and any license issued to the not-for-profit corporation under chapter 849, after the funding of operating expenses and capital improvements, shall be dedicated to the enhancement of thoroughbred purses and breeders', stallion, and special racing

awards under this chapter; the general promotion of the thoroughbred horse breeding industry; and the care in this state of thoroughbred horses retired from racing.

(b) From December 1 through April 30, no live thoroughbred racing may be conducted under the permit on any day during which another thoroughbred permitholder is conducting live thoroughbred racing within 125 air miles of the not-for-profit corporation's pari-mutuel facility unless the other thoroughbred permitholder gives its written consent.

(c) After the conversion of the quarter horse racing permit and the issuance of its initial license to conduct pari-mutuel wagering meets of thoroughbred racing, the not-for-profit corporation shall annually apply to the commission for a license pursuant to s. 550.5251.

(d) Racing under the permit may take place only at the location for which the original quarter horse racing permit was issued, which may be leased by the not-for-profit corporation for that purpose; however, the not-for-profit corporation may, without the conduct of any ratification election pursuant to s. 550.054(13) or s. 550.0651, move the location of racing under the permit to either:

1. Another location in the same county provided that such relocation is approved under the zoning and land use regulations of the applicable county or municipality; or.

2. A licensed thoroughbred training center located in a

county which has previously authorized pari-mutuel wagering. In order to be licensed as a thoroughbred training center, it must be designed and operated for the purpose of training, boarding, and caring for thoroughbred racehorses and be capable of providing instruction for sundry equestrian activities related to such horses. The facility must have permanent stabling for at least 1,000 horses and operate multiple racecourses of varying surfaces for the training of thoroughbred racing. Each racecourse must be at least 50 feet wide and 3,200 feet in length. The training facility may include riding arenas, viewing stands, pastures, grooming and veterinary care areas, and related amenities. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, such training center may not operate a cardroom, and such permitholder operating the training center may not be issued a cardroom operating license unless such permitholder held a valid cardroom license issued before January 1, 2026. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, such training center may not operate a slot machine facility, and such permitholder operating the training center may not be issued a slot machine facility operating license.

(e) A permit converted under this section and a license issued to the not-for-profit corporation under chapter 849 are not eligible for transfer to another person or entity.

(4) In order to foster and protect the statewide importance and impact of thoroughbred racing and breeding

throughout the state, the commission may adopt rules for the licensing and oversight of thoroughbred training centers in Florida which host live thoroughbred racing in conjunction with their training activities. Racing at such facilities shall only be conducted by a permit converted under this section that has provided sufficient evidence to the commission that the governance of the not-for-profit corporation is controlled by board comprised of three appointees from owner of the training center, an individual appointed by the chair of the commission, and an individual appointed by the Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The board members may expand the board membership and make additional appointments to the board from time to time pursuant to the bylaws of the corporation.

(5) The Legislature finds and declares that it has exclusive preemptive authority over the conduct of all aspects of the business operations conducted at licensed thoroughbred training centers authorized under this section to conduct pari-mutuel wagering activities at such facilities, including, but not limited to, the regulation of all equestrian activities, all wagering activities, and land use. As provided by law, only the commission shall administer this section and regulate the equestrian and pari-mutuel wagering activities conduced at, and land use applicable to, licensed thoroughbred training centers as authorized in this section and the rules adopted by the

commission with respect thereto. Any provision of a local law, a charter, an ordinance, a resolution, a regulation, a policy, an initiative, or a referendum which is in conflict with this section and which existed before, on, or after July 1, 2026, is prohibited, void, and expressly preempted to the state.

Section 10. Paragraph (c) of subsection (3) and paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection (6) of section 550.3551, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

550.3551 Transmission of racing and jai alai information; commingling of pari-mutuel pools.—

(3) Any horse track licensed under this chapter may receive broadcasts of horseraces conducted at other horse racetracks located outside this state at the racetrack enclosure of the licensee, if the horse track conducted a full schedule of live racing during the preceding state fiscal year, or if the horse track does not conduct live racing as authorized under s. 550.01215.

(c) All forms of pari-mutuel wagering are allowed on races broadcast under this section, and all money wagered by patrons on such races shall be computed as part of the total amount of money wagered at each racing performance for purposes of taxation under ss. 550.0951, 550.09512, and 550.09515. ~~Section 550.2625(2)(a), (b), and (c) does not apply to any money wagered on races broadcast under this section. Similarly,~~ The takeout shall be increased by breaks and uncashed tickets for wagers on

races broadcast under this section, notwithstanding any contrary provision of this chapter.

(6)(a) A permitholder conducting live races or games may not conduct fewer than eight live races or games on any authorized race day except as provided in this subsection. A thoroughbred permitholder may not conduct fewer than eight live races on any race day without the written approval of the ~~Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association and the Florida Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association, Inc., unless it is determined by the commission that another~~ entity that represents a majority of the thoroughbred racehorse owners and trainers conducting racing during the licensed meet ~~in the state~~. If conducting live racing, a harness permitholder may conduct fewer than eight live races on any authorized race day. Any harness horse permitholder may receive full-card broadcasts of harness horse races conducted at harness racetracks outside this state at the harness track of the permitholder and accept wagers on such harness races.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, any harness horse permitholder accepting broadcasts of out-of-state harness horse races when such permitholder is not conducting live races must make the out-of-state signal available to all permitholders eligible to conduct intertrack wagering and shall pay to guest tracks located as specified in ss. 550.615(6) and 550.6305(9)(d) 50 percent of the net proceeds

after taxes and fees to the out-of-state host track on harness race wagers which they accept. A harness horse permitholder shall be required to pay into its purse account 50 percent of the net income retained by the permitholder on account of wagering on the out-of-state broadcasts received pursuant to this subsection. ~~Nine-tenths of a percent of all harness wagering proceeds on the broadcasts received pursuant to this subsection shall be paid to the Florida Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association under the provisions of s. 550.2625(4) for the purposes provided therein.~~

Section 11. Section 550.625, Florida Statutes, is repealed.

Section 12. Paragraphs (a), (b), and (e) of subsection (9) of section 550.6305, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

550.6305 Intertrack wagering; guest track payments; accounting rules.—

(9) A host track that has contracted with an out-of-state horse track to broadcast live races conducted at such out-of-state horse track pursuant to s. 550.3551(5) may broadcast such out-of-state races to any guest track and accept wagers thereon in the same manner as is provided in s. 550.3551.

(a) For purposes of this section, "net proceeds" means the amount of takeout remaining after the payment of state taxes, purses required pursuant to s. 550.0951(3)(c)1., the cost to the permitholder required to be paid to the out-of-state horse

track, and breeders' awards paid to the commission ~~Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association~~ and the Florida Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association, to be used as set forth in this chapter ~~s. 550.625(2)(a) and (b)~~.

(b) Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter to the contrary ~~the provisions of subsection (1) and s. 550.625(1) and (2)(a)~~, the distribution of the net proceeds that are retained by a thoroughbred host track from the takeout on an out-of-state race rebroadcast under this subsection shall be as follows:

1. One-third of the remainder of such proceeds shall be paid to the guest track;

2. One-third of the remainder of such proceeds shall be retained by the host track; and

3. One-third of the remainder of such proceeds shall be paid by the host track as purses at the host track.

(e) Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter to the contrary ~~the provisions of subsection (1) and s. 550.625(1) and (2)(b)~~, the proceeds that are retained by a harness host facility from the takeout on a race broadcast under this subsection shall be distributed as follows:

1. Of the total intertrack handle on the broadcast, 1 percent shall be deducted from the proceeds and paid to the Florida Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association, Inc.~~, to be used as set forth in s. 550.625(2)(b)~~;

2. One-third of the remainder of such proceeds shall be

paid to the guest facility;

3. One-third of the remainder of such proceeds shall be retained by the host facility; and

4. One-third of the remainder of said proceeds shall be paid by the host facility as purses at the host facility.

Section 13. Paragraphs (d) through (j) of subsection (4) of section 551.104, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as paragraphs (c) through (i), respectively, and paragraph (c) of subsection (4) and subsection (10) of that section are amended to read:

551.104 License to conduct slot machine gaming.—

(4) As a condition of licensure and to maintain continued authority for the conduct of slot machine gaming, the slot machine licensee shall:

~~(c) If a thoroughbred permitholder, conduct no fewer than a full schedule of live racing or games as defined in s. 550.002(10). A permitholder's responsibility to conduct live races or games shall be reduced by the number of races or games that could not be conducted due to the direct result of fire, strike, war, hurricane, pandemic, or other disaster or event beyond the control of the permitholder.~~ Beginning July 1, 2025, each thoroughbred permitholder in compliance with this chapter is not required to pay an annual license fee to the commission as a condition of renewal.

~~(10)(a)1. No slot machine license or renewal thereof shall~~

~~be issued to an applicant holding a permit under chapter 550 to conduct pari-mutuel wagering meets of thoroughbred racing unless the applicant has on file with the commission a binding written agreement between the applicant and the Florida Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association, Inc., governing the payment of purses on live thoroughbred races conducted at the licensee's pari-mutuel facility. In addition, no slot machine license or renewal thereof shall be issued to such an applicant unless the applicant has on file with the commission a binding written agreement between the applicant and the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association, Inc., governing the payment of breeders', stallion, and special racing awards on live thoroughbred races conducted at the licensee's pari-mutuel facility. The agreement governing purses and the agreement governing awards may direct the payment of such purses and awards from revenues generated by any wagering or gaming the applicant is authorized to conduct under Florida law. All purses and awards shall be subject to the terms of chapter 550. All sums for breeders', stallion, and special racing awards shall be remitted monthly to the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association, Inc., for the payment of awards subject to the administrative fee authorized in s. 550.2625(3).~~

~~2. No slot machine license or renewal thereof shall be issued to an applicant holding a permit under chapter 550 to conduct pari-mutuel wagering meets of quarter horse racing~~

~~unless the applicant has on file with the commission a binding written agreement between the applicant and the Florida Quarter Horse Racing Association or the association representing a majority of the horse owners and trainers at the applicant's eligible facility, governing the payment of purses on live quarter horse races conducted at the licensee's pari-mutuel facility. The agreement governing purses may direct the payment of such purses from revenues generated by any wagering or gaming the applicant is authorized to conduct under Florida law. All purses shall be subject to the terms of chapter 550.~~

~~(b) The commission shall suspend a slot machine license if one or more of the agreements required under paragraph (a) are terminated or otherwise cease to operate or if the commission determines that the licensee is materially failing to comply with the terms of such an agreement. Any such suspension shall take place in accordance with chapter 120.~~

~~(c)1. If an agreement required under paragraph (a) cannot be reached prior to the initial issuance of the slot machine license, either party may request arbitration or, in the case of a renewal, if an agreement required under paragraph (a) is not in place 120 days prior to the scheduled expiration date of the slot machine license, the applicant shall immediately ask the American Arbitration Association to furnish a list of 11 arbitrators, each of whom shall have at least 5 years of commercial arbitration experience and no financial interest in~~

~~or prior relationship with any of the parties or their affiliated or related entities or principals. Each required party to the agreement shall select a single arbitrator from the list provided by the American Arbitration Association within 10 days of receipt, and the individuals so selected shall choose one additional arbitrator from the list within the next 10 days.~~

~~2. If an agreement required under paragraph (a) is not in place 60 days after the request under subparagraph 1. in the case of an initial slot machine license or, in the case of a renewal, 60 days prior to the scheduled expiration date of the slot machine license, the matter shall be immediately submitted to mandatory binding arbitration to resolve the disagreement between the parties. The three arbitrators selected pursuant to subparagraph 1. shall constitute the panel that shall arbitrate the dispute between the parties pursuant to the American Arbitration Association Commercial Arbitration Rules and chapter 682.~~

~~3. At the conclusion of the proceedings, which shall be no later than 90 days after the request under subparagraph 1. in the case of an initial slot machine license or, in the case of a renewal, 30 days prior to the scheduled expiration date of the slot machine license, the arbitration panel shall present to the parties a proposed agreement that the majority of the panel believes equitably balances the rights, interests, obligations, and reasonable expectations of the parties. The parties shall~~

~~immediately enter into such agreement, which shall satisfy the requirements of paragraph (a) and permit issuance of the pending annual slot machine license or renewal. The agreement produced by the arbitration panel under this subparagraph shall be effective until the last day of the license or renewal period or until the parties enter into a different agreement. Each party shall pay its respective costs of arbitration and shall pay one-half of the costs of the arbitration panel, unless the parties otherwise agree. If the agreement produced by the arbitration panel under this subparagraph remains in place 120 days prior to the scheduled issuance of the next annual license renewal, then the arbitration process established in this paragraph will begin again.~~

~~4. In the event that neither of the agreements required under subparagraph (a)1. or the agreement required under subparagraph (a)2. are in place by the deadlines established in this paragraph, arbitration regarding each agreement will proceed independently, with separate lists of arbitrators, arbitration panels, arbitration proceedings, and resulting agreements.~~

~~5. With respect to the agreements required under paragraph (a) governing the payment of purses, the arbitration and resulting agreement called for under this paragraph shall be limited to the payment of purses from slot machine revenues only.~~

~~(d) If any provision of this subsection or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this subsection or chapter which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this subsection are severable.~~

Section 14. Paragraph (c) of subsection (5) and paragraph (d) of subsection (13) of section 849.086, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

849.086 Cardrooms authorized.—

(5) LICENSE REQUIRED; APPLICATION; FEES.—No person may operate a cardroom in this state unless such person holds a valid cardroom license issued pursuant to this section.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a pari-mutuel permitholder, other than a permitholder issued a permit pursuant to s. 550.3345 or a purchaser, transferee, or assignee holding a valid permit for the conduct of pari-mutuel wagering approved pursuant to s. 550.054(15)(a), may not be issued a license for the operation of a cardroom if the permitholder did not hold an operating license for the conduct of pari-mutuel wagering for fiscal year 2020-2021. In order for an initial cardroom license to be issued to a thoroughbred permitholder issued a permit pursuant to s. 550.3345, the applicant must have requested, as part of its pari-mutuel annual license application, to conduct at least a full schedule of live racing.

~~In order for a cardroom license to be renewed by a thoroughbred permitholder, the applicant must have requested, as part of its pari-mutuel annual license application, to conduct at least 90 percent of the total number of live performances conducted by such permitholder during either the state fiscal year in which its initial cardroom license was issued or the state fiscal year immediately prior thereto if the permitholder ran at least a full schedule of live racing or games in the prior year~~.

(13) TAXES AND OTHER PAYMENTS.—

(d)1. Each jai alai permitholder that conducts live performances and operates a cardroom facility shall use at least 4 percent of such permitholder's cardroom monthly gross receipts to supplement jai alai prize money during the permitholder's next ensuing pari-mutuel meet.

~~2. Each thoroughbred permitholder or harness horse racing permitholder that conducts live performances and operates a cardroom facility shall use at least 50 percent of such permitholder's cardroom monthly net proceeds as follows: 47 percent to supplement purses and 3 percent to supplement breeders' awards during the permitholder's next ensuing racing meet.~~

2.~~3.~~ No cardroom license or renewal thereof shall be issued to an applicant holding a permit under chapter 550 to conduct pari-mutuel wagering meets of quarter horse racing and conducting live performances unless the applicant has on file

with the commission a binding written agreement between the applicant and the Florida Quarter Horse Racing Association or the association representing a majority of the horse owners and trainers at the applicant's eligible facility, governing the payment of purses on live quarter horse races conducted at the licensee's pari-mutuel facility. The agreement governing purses may direct the payment of such purses from revenues generated by any wagering or gaming the applicant is authorized to conduct under Florida law. All purses shall be subject to the terms of chapter 550.

Section 15. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

COMMERCE COMMITTEE

PCS CS/HB 881 by Rep. Anderson
Pari-Mutuel Wagering

AMENDMENT SUMMARY
February 3, 2026

Amendment #: PCS Strike1 by Rep. Anderson (Strike-all):

- Removes live racing requirements for thoroughbred permitholders and makes conforming changes.
- Allows a thoroughbred permitholder that does not conduct live racing to retain the ability to maintain a slot machine and cardroom license.
- Exempts thoroughbred permitholders with a slot machine license from certain thoroughbred horse racing purses and awards requirements.
- Removes the authority of the Gaming Control Commission to reissue escheated thoroughbred horse permits for failure of the permitholder to pay the required tax on handle for live performances.

COMMITTEE/SUBCOMMITTEE ACTION

ADOPTED	____	(Y/N)
ADOPTED AS AMENDED	____	(Y/N)
ADOPTED W/O OBJECTION	____	(Y/N)
FAILED TO ADOPT	____	(Y/N)
WITHDRAWN	____	(Y/N)
OTHER		

Committee/Subcommittee hearing bill: Commerce Committee
Representative Anderson offered the following:

Amendment (with title amendment)

Remove everything after the enacting clause and insert:

Section 1. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 550.01215, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

550.01215 License application; periods of operation; license fees; bond.—

(1) Each permitholder shall annually, during the period between January 15 and February 4, file in writing with the commission its application for an operating license for a pari-mutuel facility for the conduct of pari-mutuel wagering during the next state fiscal year, including intertrack and simulcast race wagering. Each application for live performances must specify the number, dates, and starting times of all live

performances that the permitholder intends to conduct. It must also specify which performances will be conducted as charity or scholarship performances.

(b)1. A greyhound permitholder may not conduct live racing. A jai alai permitholder, thoroughbred permitholder, harness horse racing permitholder, or quarter horse racing permitholder may elect not to conduct live racing or games. ~~A thoroughbred permitholder must conduct live racing.~~ A greyhound permitholder, jai alai permitholder, thoroughbred permitholder, harness horse racing permitholder, or quarter horse racing permitholder that does not conduct live racing or games retains its permit; is a pari-mutuel facility as defined in s. 550.002(23); if such permitholder has been issued a slot machine license, the facility where such permit is located remains an eligible facility as defined in s. 551.102(4), continues to be eligible for a slot machine license pursuant to s. 551.104(3), and is exempt from ~~ss. 551.104(4)(c) and (10) and~~ s. 551.114(2); is eligible, but not required, to be a guest track and, if the permitholder is a harness horse racing permitholder, to be a host track for purposes of intertrack wagering and simulcasting pursuant to ss. 550.3551, 550.615, 550.625, and 550.6305; and remains eligible for a cardroom license.

2. A permitholder or licensee may not conduct live greyhound racing or dogracing in connection with any wager for money or any other thing of value in the state. The commission

may deny, suspend, or revoke any permit or license under this chapter if a permitholder or licensee conducts live greyhound racing or dogracing in violation of this subparagraph. In addition to, or in lieu of, denial, suspension, or revocation of such permit or license, the commission may impose a civil penalty of up to $5,000 against the permitholder or licensee for a violation of this subparagraph. All penalties imposed and collected must be deposited with the Chief Financial Officer to the credit of the General Revenue Fund.

Section 2. Subsection (3) of section 550.09515, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

550.09515 Thoroughbred horse taxes; abandoned interest in a permit for nonpayment of taxes.—

(3) ~~(a)~~ The permit of a thoroughbred horse permitholder who is conducting live thoroughbred horse performances and who does not pay tax on handle for live thoroughbred horse performances for a full schedule of live races during any 2 consecutive state fiscal years shall be void and shall not be reissued ~~escheat to and become the property of the state~~ unless such failure to operate and pay tax on handle was the direct result of fire, strike, war, or other disaster or event beyond the ability of the permitholder to control. Financial hardship to the permitholder shall not, in and of itself, constitute just cause for failure to operate and pay tax on handle.

~~(b) In order to maximize the tax revenues to the state,~~

~~the commission shall reissue an escheated thoroughbred horse permit to a qualified applicant pursuant to the provisions of this chapter as for the issuance of an initial permit. However, the provisions of this chapter relating to referendum requirements for a pari-mutuel permit shall not apply to the reissuance of an escheated thoroughbred horse permit. As specified in the application and upon approval by the commission of an application for the permit, the new permitholder shall be authorized to operate a thoroughbred horse facility anywhere in the same county in which the escheated permit was authorized to be operated, notwithstanding the provisions of s. 550.054(2) relating to mileage limitations.~~

Section 3. Subsection (1) and paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of section 550.5251, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

550.5251 Florida thoroughbred racing; certain permits; operating days.—

(1) <u>If a thoroughbred permitholder elects to conduct live racing, the</u> ~~each~~ thoroughbred permitholder shall annually, during the period commencing January 15 of each year and ending February 4 of the following year, file in writing with the commission its application to conduct one or more thoroughbred racing meetings during the thoroughbred racing season commencing on the following July 1. Each application shall specify the number and dates of all performances that the permitholder intends to conduct during that thoroughbred racing season. On or

before April 15 of each year, the commission shall issue a license authorizing each permitholder to conduct performances on the dates specified in its application. Up to March 28 of each year, each permitholder may request and shall be granted changes in its application to conduct performances; but thereafter, as a condition precedent to the validity of its license and its right to retain its permit, each permitholder must operate the full number of days authorized on each of the dates set forth in its license.

(2)(a) <u>If a thoroughbred permitholder elects to conduct live racing, the</u> ~~each~~ licensed thoroughbred permitholder in this state must run an average of one race per racing day in which horses bred in this state and duly registered with the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association have preference as entries over non-Florida-bred horses, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the permitholder, the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association, and the association representing a majority of the thoroughbred racehorse owners and trainers at that location. All licensed thoroughbred racetracks shall write the conditions for such races in which Florida-bred horses are preferred so as to assure that all Florida-bred horses available for racing at such tracks are given full opportunity to run in the class of races for which they are qualified. The opportunity of running must be afforded to each class of horses in the proportion that the number of horses in this class bears to the total number of

Florida-bred horses available. A track is not required to write conditions for a race to accommodate a class of horses for which a race would otherwise not be run at the track during its meet.

Section 4. Paragraphs (d) through (j) of subsection (4) of section 551.104, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as paragraphs (c) through (i), respectively, and paragraph (c) of subsection (4) and subsection (10) of that section are amended to read:

551.104 License to conduct slot machine gaming.—

(4) As a condition of licensure and to maintain continued authority for the conduct of slot machine gaming, the slot machine licensee shall:

(c) ~~If a thoroughbred permitholder, conduct no fewer than a full schedule of live racing or games as defined in s. 550.002(10). A permitholder's responsibility to conduct live races or games shall be reduced by the number of races or games that could not be conducted due to the direct result of fire, strike, war, hurricane, pandemic, or other disaster or event beyond the control of the permitholder.~~ Beginning July 1, 2025, each thoroughbred permitholder in compliance with this chapter is not required to pay an annual license fee to the commission as a condition of renewal.

~~(10)(a)1. No slot machine license or renewal thereof shall be issued to an applicant holding a permit under chapter 550 to conduct pari-mutuel wagering meets of thoroughbred racing unless~~

~~the applicant has on file with the commission a binding written agreement between the applicant and the Florida Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association, Inc., governing the payment of purses on live thoroughbred races conducted at the licensee's pari-mutuel facility. In addition, no slot machine license or renewal thereof shall be issued to such an applicant unless the applicant has on file with the commission a binding written agreement between the applicant and the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association, Inc., governing the payment of breeders', stallion, and special racing awards on live thoroughbred races conducted at the licensee's pari-mutuel facility. The agreement governing purses and the agreement governing awards may direct the payment of such purses and awards from revenues generated by any wagering or gaming the applicant is authorized to conduct under Florida law. All purses and awards shall be subject to the terms of chapter 550. All sums for breeders', stallion, and special racing awards shall be remitted monthly to the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association, Inc., for the payment of awards subject to the administrative fee authorized in s. 550.2625(3).~~

~~2. No slot machine license or renewal thereof shall be issued to an applicant holding a permit under chapter 550 to conduct pari-mutuel wagering meets of quarter horse racing unless the applicant has on file with the commission a binding written agreement between the applicant and the Florida Quarter~~

~~Horse Racing Association or the association representing a majority of the horse owners and trainers at the applicant's eligible facility, governing the payment of purses on live quarter horse races conducted at the licensee's pari-mutuel facility. The agreement governing purses may direct the payment of such purses from revenues generated by any wagering or gaming the applicant is authorized to conduct under Florida law. All purses shall be subject to the terms of chapter 550.~~

~~(b) The commission shall suspend a slot machine license if one or more of the agreements required under paragraph (a) are terminated or otherwise cease to operate or if the commission determines that the licensee is materially failing to comply with the terms of such an agreement. Any such suspension shall take place in accordance with chapter 120.~~

~~(c)1. If an agreement required under paragraph (a) cannot be reached prior to the initial issuance of the slot machine license, either party may request arbitration or, in the case of a renewal, if an agreement required under paragraph (a) is not in place 120 days prior to the scheduled expiration date of the slot machine license, the applicant shall immediately ask the American Arbitration Association to furnish a list of 11 arbitrators, each of whom shall have at least 5 years of commercial arbitration experience and no financial interest in or prior relationship with any of the parties or their affiliated or related entities or principals. Each required~~

~~party to the agreement shall select a single arbitrator from the list provided by the American Arbitration Association within 10 days of receipt, and the individuals so selected shall choose one additional arbitrator from the list within the next 10 days.~~

~~2. If an agreement required under paragraph (a) is not in place 60 days after the request under subparagraph 1. in the case of an initial slot machine license or, in the case of a renewal, 60 days prior to the scheduled expiration date of the slot machine license, the matter shall be immediately submitted to mandatory binding arbitration to resolve the disagreement between the parties. The three arbitrators selected pursuant to subparagraph 1. shall constitute the panel that shall arbitrate the dispute between the parties pursuant to the American Arbitration Association Commercial Arbitration Rules and chapter 682.~~

~~3. At the conclusion of the proceedings, which shall be no later than 90 days after the request under subparagraph 1. in the case of an initial slot machine license or, in the case of a renewal, 30 days prior to the scheduled expiration date of the slot machine license, the arbitration panel shall present to the parties a proposed agreement that the majority of the panel believes equitably balances the rights, interests, obligations, and reasonable expectations of the parties. The parties shall immediately enter into such agreement, which shall satisfy the requirements of paragraph (a) and permit issuance of the pending~~

~~annual slot machine license or renewal. The agreement produced by the arbitration panel under this subparagraph shall be effective until the last day of the license or renewal period or until the parties enter into a different agreement. Each party shall pay its respective costs of arbitration and shall pay one-half of the costs of the arbitration panel, unless the parties otherwise agree. If the agreement produced by the arbitration panel under this subparagraph remains in place 120 days prior to the scheduled issuance of the next annual license renewal, then the arbitration process established in this paragraph will begin again.~~

~~4. In the event that neither of the agreements required under subparagraph (a)1. or the agreement required under subparagraph (a)2. are in place by the deadlines established in this paragraph, arbitration regarding each agreement will proceed independently, with separate lists of arbitrators, arbitration panels, arbitration proceedings, and resulting agreements.~~

~~5. With respect to the agreements required under paragraph (a) governing the payment of purses, the arbitration and resulting agreement called for under this paragraph shall be limited to the payment of purses from slot machine revenues only.~~

~~(d) If any provision of this subsection or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity~~

~~does not affect other provisions or applications of this subsection or chapter which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this subsection are severable.~~

Section 5. Paragraph (c) of subsection (5) and paragraph (d) of subsection (13) of section 849.086, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

849.086 Cardrooms authorized.—

(5) LICENSE REQUIRED; APPLICATION; FEES.—No person may operate a cardroom in this state unless such person holds a valid cardroom license issued pursuant to this section.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a pari-mutuel permitholder, other than a permitholder issued a permit pursuant to s. 550.3345 or a purchaser, transferee, or assignee holding a valid permit for the conduct of pari-mutuel wagering approved pursuant to s. 550.054(15)(a), may not be issued a license for the operation of a cardroom if the permitholder did not hold an operating license for the conduct of pari-mutuel wagering for fiscal year 2020-2021. In order for an initial cardroom license to be issued to a thoroughbred permitholder issued a permit pursuant to s. 550.3345, the applicant must have requested, as part of its pari-mutuel annual license application, to conduct at least a full schedule of live racing. ~~In order for a cardroom license to be renewed by a thoroughbred permitholder, the applicant must have requested, as part of its~~

~~pari-mutuel annual license application, to conduct at least 90 percent of the total number of live performances conducted by such permitholder during either the state fiscal year in which its initial cardroom license was issued or the state fiscal year immediately prior thereto if the permitholder ran at least a full schedule of live racing or games in the prior year.~~

(13) TAXES AND OTHER PAYMENTS.—

(d)1. Each jai alai permitholder that conducts live performances and operates a cardroom facility shall use at least 4 percent of such permitholder's cardroom monthly gross receipts to supplement jai alai prize money during the permitholder's next ensuing pari-mutuel meet.

~~2. Each thoroughbred permitholder or harness horse racing permitholder that conducts live performances and operates a cardroom facility shall use at least 50 percent of such permitholder's cardroom monthly net proceeds as follows: 47 percent to supplement purses and 3 percent to supplement breeders' awards during the permitholder's next ensuing racing meet.~~

2.~~3.~~ No cardroom license or renewal thereof shall be issued to an applicant holding a permit under chapter 550 to conduct pari-mutuel wagering meets of quarter horse racing and conducting live performances unless the applicant has on file with the commission a binding written agreement between the applicant and the Florida Quarter Horse Racing Association or

the association representing a majority of the horse owners and trainers at the applicant's eligible facility, governing the payment of purses on live quarter horse races conducted at the licensee's pari-mutuel facility. The agreement governing purses may direct the payment of such purses from revenues generated by any wagering or gaming the applicant is authorized to conduct under Florida law. All purses shall be subject to the terms of chapter 550.

Section 6. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

T I T L E A M E N D M E N T

Remove everything before the enacting clause and insert:
An act relating to pari-mutuel wagering; amending s. 550.01215, F.S.; authorizing thoroughbred permitholders to elect not to conduct live racing or games; specifying that such permitholders retain certain permits, eligibility, exemptions, and licenses; providing that certain permitholders are eligible to be a guest track; amending s. 550.09515, F.S.; prohibiting reissuance of horse permits to certain permitholders who do not pay tax on handle for live races for a specified period; removing provisions requiring reissuance of escheated horse permits; amending s. 550.5251, F.S.; conforming provisions to

changes made by the act; amending s. 551.104, F.S.; revising specified requirements for thoroughbred permitholders who have certain slot machine licenses; amending s. 849.086, F.S.; revising requirements for certain permitholders who have cardroom licenses; providing an effective date.