A bill to be entitled
An act relating to insurance; amending s. 624.155, F.S.; deleting a provision that tolls, under certain circumstances, a period before a civil action against an insurer may be brought; deleting a provision authorizing the Department of Financial Services to return a civil remedy notice for lack of specificity; prohibiting the filing of the notice within a certain timeframe under certain circumstances; amending s. 626.914, F.S.; revising the definition of the term "diligent effort," as used in the Surplus Lines Law; amending s. 626.9541, F.S.; providing construction; amending s. 627.0655, F.S.; revising the circumstances under which certain insurance premium discounts are authorized; amending s. 627.4555, F.S.; requiring life insurers that are required to provide a specified notice to policyowners of an impending lapse in coverage to also notify the policyowner's agent of record within a certain timeframe; providing that the agent is not responsible for any lapse in coverage; exempting the insurer from the requirement under certain circumstances; amending s. 627.7015, F.S.; revising the periods of time when property insurers must notify policyholders of certain mediation programs; providing an effective date.
Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Subsection (3) of section 624.155, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

624.155 Civil remedy.—

(3)(a) As a condition precedent to bringing an action under this section, the department and the authorized insurer must have been given 60 days' written notice of the violation. If the department returns a notice for lack of specificity, the 60-day time period shall not begin until a proper notice is filed.

(b) The notice shall be on a form provided by the department and shall state with specificity the following information, and such other information as the department may require:

1. The statutory provision, including the specific language of the statute, which the authorized insurer allegedly violated.

2. The facts and circumstances giving rise to the violation.

3. The name of any individual involved in the violation.

4. Reference to specific policy language that is relevant to the violation, if any. If the person bringing the civil action is a third party claimant, she or he shall not be
required to reference the specific policy language if the
authorized insurer has not provided a copy of the policy to the
third party claimant pursuant to written request.

5. A statement that the notice is given in order to
perfect the right to pursue the civil remedy authorized by this
section.

   (c) Within 20 days of receipt of the notice, the
department may return any notice that does not provide the
specific information required by this section, and the
department shall indicate the specific deficiencies contained in
the notice. A determination by the department to return a notice
for lack of specificity shall be exempt from the requirements of
chapter 120.

   (c)(d) No action shall lie if, within 60 days after filing
notice, the damages are paid or the circumstances giving rise to
the violation are corrected.

   (d)(e) The authorized insurer that is the recipient of a
notice filed pursuant to this section shall report to the
department on the disposition of the alleged violation.

   (e)(f) The applicable statute of limitations for an action
under this section shall be tolled for a period of 65 days by
the mailing of the notice required by this subsection or the
mailing of a subsequent notice required by this subsection.

   (f) A notice required under this subsection may not be
filed within 60 days after appraisal is invoked by any party in
a residential property insurance claim.

Section 2. Subsection (4) of section 626.914, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

626.914 Definitions.—As used in this Surplus Lines Law, the term:

(4) "Diligent effort" means seeking coverage from and having been rejected by at least three authorized insurers currently writing this type of coverage and documenting these rejections. However, if the residential structure has a dwelling replacement cost of $700,000 $1 million or more, the term means seeking coverage from and having been rejected by at least one authorized insurer currently writing this type of coverage and documenting this rejection.

Section 3. Subsection (5) is added to section 626.9541, Florida Statutes, to read:

626.9541 Unfair methods of competition and unfair or deceptive acts or practices defined.—

(5) LOSS CONTROL AND LOSS MITIGATION.—This section does not prohibit an insurer or agent from offering or giving to an insured, for free or at a discounted price, services or other merchandise, goods, wares, or other items of value that relate to loss control or loss mitigation with respect to the risks covered under the policy.

Section 4. Section 627.0655, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:
627.0655 Policyholder loss or expense-related premium discounts.—An insurer or person authorized to engage in the business of insurance in this state may include, in the premium charged an insured for any policy, contract, or certificate of insurance, a discount based on the fact that another policy, contract, or certificate of any type has been purchased by the insured from:

1. The same insurer or insurer group, or another insurer under a joint marketing agreement;
2. The Citizens Property Insurance Corporation created under s. 627.351(6), if the same insurance agent is servicing both policies;
3. An insurer that has removed the policy from the Citizens Property Insurance Corporation or issued a policy pursuant to the clearinghouse program under s. 627.3518, if the same insurance agent is servicing both policies; or
4. An insurer, if the same insurance agent is servicing the policies.

Section 5. Section 627.4555, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

627.4555 Secondary notice.—

1. Except as provided in this section, a contract for life insurance issued or issued for delivery in this state on or after October 1, 1997, covering a natural person 64 years of age or older, which has been in force for at least 1 year, may not
be lapsed for nonpayment of premium unless, after expiration of
the grace period, and at least 21 days before the effective date
of any such lapse, the insurer has mailed a notification of the
impending lapse in coverage to the policyowner and to a
specified secondary addressee if such addressee has been
designated in writing by name and address by the policyowner. An
insurer issuing a life insurance contract on or after October 1,
1997, shall notify the applicant of the right to designate a
secondary addressee at the time of application for the policy,
on a form provided by the insurer, and at any time the policy is
in force, by submitting a written notice to the insurer
containing the name and address of the secondary addressee. For
purposes of any life insurance policy that provides a grace
period of more than 51 days for nonpayment of premiums, the
notice of impending lapse in coverage required by this section
must be mailed to the policyowner and the secondary addressee at
least 21 days before the expiration of the grace period provided
in the policy. This section does not apply to any life insurance
contract under which premiums are payable monthly or more
frequently and are regularly collected by a licensed agent or
are paid by credit card or any preauthorized check processing or
automatic debit service of a financial institution.

(2) If the policyowner has a life agent of record or any
agent of record, the insurer must also notify the agent of the
impending lapse in coverage or mail or send electronically a
copy of the notification of the impending lapse in coverage under subsection (1) to the agent at least 21 days before the effective date of any such lapse. Receipt of such notice does not make the agent responsible for any lapse in coverage. An insurer is not required to notify the agent under this subsection if any of the following applies:

(a) The insurer maintains an online system that allows an agent to independently determine if a policy has lapsed.

(b) The insurer has no record of the current agent of record.

(c) The agent is employed by the insurer or an affiliate of the insurer.

Section 6. Subsection (2) of section 627.7015, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

627.7015 Alternative procedure for resolution of disputed property insurance claims.—

(2) Either at the time a first-party claim within the scope of this section is filed by the policyholder or at the time coverage is applied and payment is determined, the insurer shall notify the policyholder of its right to participate in the mediation program under this section. The department shall prepare a consumer information pamphlet for distribution to persons participating in mediation.

Section 7. This act shall take effect July 1, 2019.