

By Senator Thurston

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1                   A bill to be entitled  
2       An act relating to trust funds; creating s. 550.914,  
3       F.S.; providing legislative findings; creating the  
4       Greyhound Compensation Trust Fund within the Division  
5       of Pari-mutuel Wagering within the Department of  
6       Business and Professional Regulation; specifying the  
7       purpose of the fund and authorized uses of the assets;  
8       requiring the division to contract with a certain  
9       organization to develop criteria and guidelines  
10      relating to the fund; requiring that any balances in  
11      the fund at the end of the fiscal year remain in the  
12      fund; providing for future review and termination of  
13      the fund; providing a contingent effective date.

14  
15       WHEREAS, Florida has a long and rich history of greyhound  
16      racing, with the first racing greyhound track in the state being  
17      built in 1922, and

18       WHEREAS, afterwards, racing greyhound tracks were quickly  
19      established throughout Florida, including a track in St.  
20      Petersburg in 1925, a track in Miami in 1926, tracks in Sanford-  
21      Orlando and Miami Beach in 1927, and a track in Tampa in 1932,  
22      and

23       WHEREAS, in 1931, Florida became the first state in the  
24      United States to legalize wagering on greyhounds, and

25       WHEREAS, the greyhound racing industry employs thousands of  
26      people in Florida, including greyhound owners, trainers, and  
27      other business owners who have invested millions of dollars in  
28      their greyhound-racing related businesses, and

29       WHEREAS, s. 32, Article X of the State Constitution

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30 authorized greyhound racing permitholders to discontinue live  
31 greyhound racing beginning December 31, 2018, and prohibits the  
32 wagering on and racing of greyhounds after December 31, 2020,  
33 and

34 WHEREAS, the constitutional ban on the wagering on and  
35 racing of greyhounds will displace kennel operators and others  
36 employed in the greyhound racing industry and has already had an  
37 immediate and adverse economic impact on the investment-backed  
38 expectations of greyhound racing dog owners, breeders, and other  
39 property owners negatively impacted by the ban, and

40 WHEREAS, the United States Constitution and the State  
41 Constitution prohibit the government from taking private  
42 property through regulation, or otherwise, without providing the  
43 owner just compensation, and

44 WHEREAS, it is appropriate to lessen the financial impact  
45 and burden resulting from the constitutional ban on greyhound  
46 racing and wagering, NOW, THEREFORE,

47  
48 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

49  
50 Section 1. Section 550.914, Florida Statutes, is created to  
51 read:

52 550.914 Greyhound Compensation Trust Fund.-

53 (1) The Legislature finds that:

54 (a) As a result of the approval by the voters of this state  
55 of the amendment to the State Constitution prohibiting the  
56 wagering on and racing of greyhounds:

57 1. Thousands of people who work in the greyhound racing  
58 industry will lose their jobs; and

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59           2. Racing greyhound owners and kennel owners will lose  
60 millions of dollars in property value; and

61           (b) It is appropriate and necessary to establish a fund to  
62 compensate such persons by redirecting revenue generated by the  
63 pari-mutuel industry.

64           (2) The Greyhound Compensation Trust Fund is created within  
65 the division.

66           (3) (a) The fund is established for use as a depository for  
67 funds to be used for compensating persons who were affected by  
68 the prohibition on the wagering on and racing of greyhounds in  
69 the State Constitution. Moneys to be credited to the trust fund  
70 consist of funds from pari-mutuel, slot machine, and cardroom  
71 revenues under this chapter, chapter 551, and s. 849.086,  
72 respectively.

73           (b) The division shall contract with a statewide  
74 organization whose purpose is to promote greyhound racing in  
75 this state to develop criteria and guidelines for the  
76 qualification of persons for compensation under this section.

77           (4) Notwithstanding s. 216.301 and pursuant to s. 216.351,  
78 any balance in the trust fund at the end of the fiscal year  
79 shall remain in the trust fund at the end of the year and be  
80 available for carrying out the purposes of the trust fund.

81           (5) In accordance with s. 19(f)(2), Art. III of the State  
82 Constitution, the Greyhound Compensation Trust Fund, unless  
83 terminated sooner, shall be terminated on July 1, 2024. Before  
84 its scheduled termination, the trust fund shall be reviewed as  
85 provided in s. 215.3206(1) and (2).

86           Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law,  
87 if SB \_\_\_ or similar legislation is adopted in the same

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88 legislative session or an extension thereof and becomes a law.