

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Banking and Insurance

BILL: SB 1612

INTRODUCER: Senator Grall

SUBJECT: Financial Institutions

DATE: March 14, 2025

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Moody	Knudson	BI	Pre-meeting
2.			AEG	
3.			FP	

I. Summary:

SB 1612 provides various amendments to the financial institutions code. The bill:

- Amends the due dates by which time a financial institution must pay semiannual assessments and specifies the method and timing of when the semiannual assessments must be made.
- Authorizes the Office of Financial Regulation (OFR) to issue a certificate of acquisition to an acquiring financial institution after specified circumstances are met.
- Repeals the provision prohibiting credit unions from investing more than five percent of the capital of the credit union in specified fixed assets.
- Repeals the requirement for credit unions to maintain a regular reserve and modifies the definition of the term “equity” to remove reference to “regular reserve.”
- Removes a timeframe for certain requirements by directors of a proposed new bank or trust company.
- Modifies the period in which a proposed bank or trust company must open and conduct a general commercial bank or trust company business.

See Section V. Fiscal Impact Statement.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2025.

II. Present Situation:

Financial Institutions

A financial institution must have a federal or state charter to accept deposits. Banks are chartered and regulated as national banks by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) within the U.S. Department of the Treasury or as state banks by a state regulator.¹

The Florida Financial Institutions Codes apply to all state-authorized or state-chartered financial banks, trust companies, and related entities.² The OFR licenses and regulates 196 financial entities, including 57 state-chartered banks.³ There are also 30 federally-chartered banks operating in Florida.⁴

Banks and Trusts

Creation and Opening of a New Bank of Trust Company – Federal Law

Federally-chartered banks, publicly or privately held, must comply with rigorous regulatory requirements to become chartered.⁵ No person is allowed to offer any national bank issued security unless certain registration requirements are filed with the OCC,⁶ unless an exemption applies, such as nonpublic offerings.⁷ The OCC grants approval of a charter application in two phases: preliminary approval and final approval.⁸ Preliminary approval expires if the proposed national bank:

- Fails to raise the required capital within 12 months from the date the OCC grants preliminary approval.
- Does not commence business within 18 months from the date of preliminary approval, unless the OCC grants an extension.⁹

A national bank is required to raise its capital before business commences. For the OCC to issue final approval, organizers must complete all key phases of organizing the bank. Final approval means a charter for the bank has been issued and the bank can begin conducting business.¹⁰

Creation and Opening of a New Bank of Trust Company – Florida Law

State laws specify requirements that a proposed new bank or trust company must comply with to be chartered. Directors are required to complete the stock offering and file with the OFR a list of

¹ Congressional Research Service, *Introduction to Financial Services: Banking*, p. 1, January 5, 2023, available at: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10035> (last visited March 12, 2025).

² Section 655.005(1)(k), F.S., states that the Financial Institutions Codes includes: Ch. 655, financial institutions generally; Ch. 657, credit unions; Ch. 658, banks and trust companies; Ch. 660, trust business; Ch. 662, family trust companies; Ch. 663, international banking; Ch. 665, relating to associations; and Ch. 667, savings banks.

³ The OFR, *Fast Facts* (2025 ed.), available at: [fast-facts.pdf](#) (last visited March 12, 2025) (hereinafter cited as “2025 OFR Fast Facts”).

⁴ The OCC, *National Banks Active As of 2/28/2025*, February 28, 2025, available at [national-by-state.pdf](#) (March 12, 2025).

⁵ See 12 CFR 16; Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, *Comptroller’s Licensing Manual Charters*, p. 4, December 2021, available at [charters.pdf](#) (last visited March 11, 2025) (hereinafter cited as “OCC Licensing Manual for Charters”).

⁶ 12 CFR 16.3

⁷ 12 CFR 16.7

⁸ OCC Licensing Manual for Charters at p. 3.

⁹ 12 CFR 5.20(i)(6)(iv)

¹⁰ OCC Licensing Manual for Charters at p. 3.

subscribers of a proposed bank or trust company detailing specified information within 6 months of corporate existence and at least 30 days prior to opening for business.¹¹ The OFR reports “[t]he 6-month time requirement has been a problem for recent bank start-ups and is more restrictive than [the 12-month requirement] federally.”¹² Directors must also provide the OFR with any additional information relating to finances, business, or biography as the commission or the OFR may reasonable require for certain subscribers of stock,¹³ and the OFR must conduct an investigation of their character and certain financial criteria.¹⁴

Banks and trust companies are required to open and conduct a general commercial bank or trust company no later than 12 months after it commences its corporate existence.¹⁵ The corporation must notify the OFR, within a specified time, of its intended opening date and confirm its compliance with any orders issued by the OFR.¹⁶ The OFR must conduct a preopening examination and issue a certificate of authorization to transact a general commercial bank or trust business if certain requirements are met.¹⁷

Financial Institutions Assessments

Financial institutions are required to pay semiannual assessments based on the total assets as of the last business day of June and December of each year,¹⁸ covering the six-month period following the first day of the month in which they are due.¹⁹ The semiannual assessments must be calculated and sent to the OFR within a 30-day period. They must be received (if by mail) or transmitted (if by wire transfer, an automated clearinghouse, or other electronic means approved by the OFR) by January and July 31 of each year. The OFR may levy late penalties of up to \$100 per day or any part of the day that a semiannual assessment is overdue unless the OFR excuses the overdue payment for good cause. The OFR may levy an administrative fine of up to \$1,000 per day for an intentional late payment of a semiannual assessment.²⁰

Certificate of Acquisition

Florida law allows a financial institution to acquire 50 percent or more of the assets, liabilities, or a combination of both of any financial institution subject to the OFR approval and other specified conditions. For instance, both financial institutions must adopt a plan for the acquisition, assumption, or sale which must contain specified information.²¹ The OFR is required to approve or disapprove of the plan and, following adoption of the plan by the transferring financial institution, must certify in writing that the plan has been approved.²² The transferring financial institution may abandon the transaction despite the members’ or stockholders’ approval

¹¹ Section 658.235(1), F.S.

¹² The OFR, *2025 Agency Legislative Bill Analysis Florida Office of Financial Regulation for SB 1612*, March 10, 2025 (on file with Senate Committee on Banking and Insurance) (hereinafter cited as “2025 OFR Agency Analysis for SB 1612”).

¹³ Section 658.235(2), F.S.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ Section 658.25(1), F.S.

¹⁶ Section 658.25(2), F.S.

¹⁷ Section 658.25(3), F.S.

¹⁸ Section 655.047(1), F.S.

¹⁹ Section 655.047(3), F.S.

²⁰ Section 655.047(2), F.S.

²¹ Section 655.414(2), F.S.

²² Section 655.414(4) and (5), F.S.

and the OFR's certification of the plan.²³ Unlike the OFR's authority to issue a Certificate of Merger when two credit unions merge,²⁴ the OFR does not have authority to issue a Certificate of Acquisition when a financial institution purchases or wholly acquires another financial institution.²⁵

Credit Unions

A credit union must have a federal or state charter to operate in Florida. Credit unions are chartered and regulated as a national credit union by the National Credit Union Association (NCUA).²⁶ Such membership is limited to a group or groups with a common bond of occupation or association within a defined community. Deposits into a federal credit union allow members to become owners of the credit union, run to become a credit union official, and vote on certain matters.²⁷

The Florida Financial Institutions Codes apply to all state-chartered credit unions.²⁸ There are approximately 138 credit unions in Florida²⁹ with 67 of them being state-chartered.³⁰ Florida law provides that any person may be admitted to a credit union upon payment of any required fee, payment of shares, and compliance with the credit union bylaws.³¹ State-chartered credit unions operate as financial institutions except for exercising certain incidental powers authorized by law.³²

Investments

Florida law regulates how credit unions may invest funds. There are no limits with respect to investing in certain assets, for instance United States Treasury bonds. Examples of other classes of assets that are subject to investment limits include up to:³³

- Twenty-five percent of the credit union's capital in shares or deposit accounts in any one corporate credit union or other insured financial depository institution.
- One percent of the credit union's capital in corporate obligations of any one corporation which is an affiliate or subsidiary of the credit union in certain circumstances.
- Five percent of the credit union's capital in real estate and improvements, furniture, fixtures, and equipment utilized by the credit union for the transaction of business. Credit unions may receive prior written approval from the OFR to exceed the five percent limit if the following criteria is met:
 - The proposed investment is necessary.

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ Section 657.065, F.S.

²⁵ Section 655.414(5), F.S.

²⁶ National Credit Union Administration, *Overview of the Charter Application Process*, April 14, 2022, available at [Overview of the Charter Application Process | NCUA](#) (last visited March 12, 2025).

²⁷ National Credit Union Administration, *Overview of Federal Credit Unions*, April 14, 2022, available at [Overview of Federal Credit Unions | NCUA](#) (last visited March 12, 2025).

²⁸ Section 655.005(1)(k), F.S., states that the Financial Institutions Codes includes ch. 657, credit unions.

²⁹ National Credit Union Service Organization, *Florida Credit Unions*, available at [Florida Credit Unions](#) (last visited March 12, 2025).

³⁰ 2025 OFR Fast Facts at p. 4.

³¹ Section 657.023(1), F.S.

³² Section 657.031(3), F.S.

³³ Section 657.042, F.S.

- The amount is commensurate with the size and needs of the credit union.
- The investment will be beneficial to the members.
- A reasonable plan is developed to reduce the investment to statutory limits.

In 2015, the NCUA removed the federal regulation that restricted federal credit unions from investing more than five percent aggregate in fixed-asset investments.³⁴

Reserve Accounts

Florida law requires credit unions to maintain the following reserve accounts:

- Allowance for loan and lease losses;
- Regular reserve to meet losses which must not be decreased unless the OFR approves the decrease or as provided by rule of the commission;³⁵
- Allowance for investment losses; and
- Special reserves to protect members against losses from risk assets or extended credit when required by rule or other specified circumstances.³⁶

In 2022, the NCUA amended federal regulations and removed the requirement for federal credit unions to maintain a regular reserve account.³⁷

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 1612 provides various amendments to the financial institutions code.

Section 1 of the bill modifies the deadlines for when financial institutions must pay semiannual assessments from January 31 and July 31 to March 31 and September 30 of each year. The bill removes the distinction of the method and time for which electronic payments must be transmitted, and provides that all payments whether sent by mail, wire transfer, or automated clearinghouse, or other electronic means approved by the OFR must be received by the due date. The bill also removes the provision that specifies the assessment covers a 6-month period following the first day of the month in which they are due and instead provides that the payments are for the 6-month periods beginning January 1 and July 1.

The OFR reports that financial institutions are often forced to make asset estimates when determining their semiannual assessment because of the short deadlines provided for under current law. The OFR and financial institutions must recalculate the semiannual assessments once the institutions' actual total assets are determined. The bill provides for two additional months to calculate and pay the assessment which should allow for more efficiency by reducing the need for subsequent adjustments and saving the OFR and financial institutions staff time.³⁸

³⁴ The NCUA, *Fixed-Asset Rule Provides Relief to More than 3,800 Federal Credit Unions*, July 2015, available at [Fixed-Asset Rule Provides Relief to More than 3,800 Federal Credit Unions | NCUA](#) (last visited March 12, 2025).

³⁵ Section 657.043(2), F.S.

³⁶ Section 657.043, F.S.

³⁷ The NCUA, *Risk-Based Capital Frequently Asked Questions: Is Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) for Credit Unions Changing with the Revised Capital Adequacy Standards?*, April 14, 2022, available at [Risk-Based Capital Frequently Asked Questions | NCUA](#) (last visited March 12, 2025).

³⁸ 2025 OFR Agency Analysis for SB 1612.

Section 2 of the bill authorizes the OFR to issue a certificate of acquisition to an acquiring financial institution confirming that the acquisition, assumption, or sale transaction has been completed. The OFR suggests that issuing certificates of acquisition is “valuable to institutions for several reasons including filing with local municipalities as proof of a transaction.”³⁹ Authorizing the OFR with this statutory authority would give the agency a similar power that it has with respect to issuing certificates of mergers for credit unions.

Section 4 of the bill repeals the provision that provides a credit union may invest only up to five percent of the credit union’s capital in real estate and improvements, furniture, fixtures, and equipment utilized by the credit union for the transaction of business. A related provision is also repealed allowing credit unions to exceed the five percent limit with prior written approval by the OFR if all the specified criteria are met. This amendment is intended to make state credit unions more competitive with federal credit unions that no longer must comply with similar requirements. Further, the OFR reports that the “NCUA’s examination and supervision program will address credit unions’ safe and sound management of fixed assets.”⁴⁰

Section 5 of the bill repeals the provision requiring credit unions to maintain a regular reserve to meet losses and prohibiting such reserve from being decreased without the prior written approval of the OFR or as prescribed by rule. This amendment is consistent with the removal of the regular reserve requirement from federal regulation, and allows state credit unions to close their regular reserve into undivided earnings without prior OFR approval.⁴¹ Given that credit unions must still comply with the requirement to have an allowance for loan losses reserve account and given OFR’s ability to require a credit union to establish special reserves in certain circumstances, a regular reserve account has become unnecessary.⁴² **Section 3** of the bill amends the definition of “equity” to remove reference to “regular reserve” since the requirement to maintain such reserve has been repealed.

Section 6 of the bill removes directors’ time requirement to complete a stock offering and file with the OFR a final list of subscribers with certain information within six months after commencement of corporate existence. Such offering and submission of the list must still be completed at least 30 days before the proposed bank or trust company opens. This amendment allows more time for organizing groups to raise capital needed to start a new bank or trust company.⁴³

Section 7 of the bill modifies the timeframe in which a new bank or trust company must open and conduct general commercial bank or trust business to within 18 months after the issuance of a final order of approval by the OFR, rather than no later than 12 months after the commencement of its corporate existence. This amendment “facilitates *de novo* bank and trust company start-ups and eliminates Florida’s disadvantage compared to federal regulations.”⁴⁴

Section 8 of the bill provides for the effective date of July 1, 2025.

³⁹ *Id.*

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² 2025 OFR Agency Analysis for SB 1612.

⁴³ *Id.*

⁴⁴ *Id.*

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The OFR reports there is no fiscal impact to state government.⁴⁵

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

Rules 69U-120.730, 69U-110.053, and 69U-140.020, F.A.C., need to be amended to update financial institutions' new deadlines for payment of semiannual assessments.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ *Id.*

⁴⁶ 2025 OFR Agency Analysis for SB 1612.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 655.047, 655.414, 657.002, 658.235, and 658.25.

This bill repeals the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 657.042 and 657.043.

IX. Additional Information:**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
