

HB 1375

2026

A bill to be entitled
An act relating to the Florida Museum of History;
authorizing the Department of State to partner with
certain county commissions and local entities for a
specified purpose; requiring each Florida Museum of
History to be owned, managed, and operated by a
certain entity; establishing the Florida Museum of
History Advisory Committee; providing membership and
duties of the committee; requiring each county
commission and local entity to create a Florida Museum
of History Board; providing for membership and duties
of the operating board; requiring that certain
entities develop and execute a marketing plan to
promote each Florida Museum of History; requiring
financial feasibility studies; providing for funding
from specific sources for certain purposes; providing
requirements for the Florida Museum of History;
providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, in 2023, the Legislature established the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force to identify, evaluate, and recommend potential locations for a leading world-class museum dedicated to preserving, interpreting, and celebrating the history, culture, and contributions of Black Floridians and Black Americans, and

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26 WHEREAS, the task force received applications from
27 multiple jurisdictions and, in April 2024, adopted
28 previously developed rankings that narrowed the field from
29 thirteen potential sites to three: Eatonville in Orange
30 County, St. Augustine in St. Johns County, and Opa-locka in
31 Miami-Dade County, and

32 WHEREAS, due to limited resources, incomplete data,
33 and a narrowing legislative deadline, the task force
34 reaffirmed these rankings without conducting new
35 feasibility, financial, or comparative analyses of the
36 three potential sites, and

37 WHEREAS, the task force voted on May 21, 2024, to
38 recommend St. Augustine in St. Johns County as the site for
39 the future Florida Museum of Black History, and

40 WHEREAS, on June 30, 2024, the Division of Historical
41 Resources, with input from the task force, issued a report
42 describing the recommendation as a preliminary roadmap and
43 requesting additional legislative funding to support
44 feasibility and economic impact studies for each of the
45 three top-ranked locations, and

46 WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes that the task
47 force found no location with a clearly superior feasibility
48 or sustainability profile, underscoring the need for a
49 comprehensive, data-driven study before a final
50 designation, and

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51 WHEREAS, it is the intent of the Legislature that
52 comprehensive feasibility and economic impact studies be
53 completed and reviewed for the three top-ranked locations
54 in Orange County, St. Augustine in St. Johns County, and
55 Opa-locka in Miami-Dade County before any final site
56 designation, construction authorization, or allocation of
57 state funds, and

58 WHEREAS, these studies shall evaluate visitation
59 potential, infrastructure readiness, financial
60 sustainability, and the demonstrated capacity of each
61 locality to provide at least a 50 percent local funding
62 match through public, philanthropic, or private sources,
63 and

64 WHEREAS, a world-class museum is characterized by its
65 extraordinary collection of historical items and a
66 thoughtfully curated visitor experience, and

67 WHEREAS, these institutions serve as vital
68 repositories of our shared heritage, actively shaping our
69 understanding of the past, present, and future, and

70 WHEREAS, a world-class museum is not defined by a big
71 building or a famous name, but is an unparalleled
72 combination of an extraordinary and meticulously preserved
73 collection and an unforgettable, thoughtfully curated
74 visitor experience that transcends mere viewing, inviting
75 deep engagement and reflection, and

76 WHEREAS, the Florida Museum of History is intended to
77 be more than a museum about slavery and the Civil Rights
78 Movement in America, and

79 WHEREAS, the Florida Museum of History is envisioned
80 as a unifying, cultural, and educational institution of
81 statewide significance, with the capacity to advance
82 understanding, unity, and economic opportunity for
83 residents and visitors alike, and

84 WHEREAS, establishing and sustaining the Florida
85 Museum of History will require a shared commitment from
86 state, local, and private partners, and

87 WHEREAS, at least 50 percent of total project funding
88 should come from local and regional public, philanthropic,
89 and private sources to ensure community ownership and
90 fiscal balance, and

91 WHEREAS, the Legislature finds that this partnership
92 structure, balancing state investment with strong local
93 commitment, is essential to ensure that the museum's
94 establishment is both equitable and fiscally responsible,
95 and

96 WHEREAS, it is the intent of the Legislature that the
97 Florida Museum of History operate as a statewide
98 institution with collaborative governance that reflects
99 Florida's geographic and cultural diversity and fosters
100 partnerships among local governments, educational

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101 institutions, and cultural organizations throughout the
102 state, and

103 WHEREAS, the Legislature reaffirms its commitment to
104 supporting a museum that honors the history and
105 achievements of Black Floridians, advances public
106 understanding, stimulates tourism and economic opportunity,
107 and stands as a lasting symbol of unity and progress for
108 future generations, NOW, THEREFORE,

109

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

111

112 **Section 1.** (1) The Department of State may partner with
113 the county commissions of Orange, St. Johns, and Miami-Dade
114 Counties, and each local entity designated by the commissions to
115 design, construct, operate, and manage Florida Museums of
116 History in Orange, St. Johns, and Miami-Dade Counties. Once
117 constructed, each Florida Museum of History must be owned,
118 managed, and operated by the local entity designated by the
119 respective county commission.

120 (2) (a) The Florida Museum of History Advisory Committee, a
121 committee as defined in s. 20.03, Florida Statutes, is created
122 within the Department of State to guide and assist with
123 planning, designing, and constructing each Florida Museum of
124 History. Except as otherwise provided in this section, the
125 committee shall operate in a manner consistent with s. 20.052,

126 Florida Statutes.

127 (b) The Florida Museum of History Advisory Committee shall
128 consist of the following members, who must have expertise in
129 Florida history, Black History, curation, architecture, and
130 museum design:

131 1. One member appointed by the Governor.

132 2. One member appointed by the President of the Senate.

133 3. One member appointed by the Speaker of the House of
134 Representatives.

135 4. One member appointed by the Secretary of the Department
136 of State.

137 5. The executive director of the Florida Tourism Industry
138 Marketing Corporation.

139 6. The chair and vice chair of the Florida Legislative
140 Black Caucus, who are not required to have expertise in Florida
141 history, Black History, curation, architecture, and museum
142 design. The chair and vice chair of the Florida Legislative
143 Black Caucus, in lieu of serving on the Florida Museum of
144 History Advisory Committee, may each appoint one person who has
145 expertise in Black History, Florida history, curation,
146 architecture, and museum design to serve on the Florida Museum
147 of History Advisory Committee.

148 (c) The Florida Museum of History Advisory Committee, in
149 partnership with each designated local entity, shall provide
150 guidance and direction in choosing the architects, museum

151 designers, curators, and other contractors to design, construct,
152 operate, and manage each Florida Museum of History. To that end,
153 such local entities shall:

154 1. Procure architectural design services.

155 2. Procure construction management services based upon the
156 final architectural designs and construction budgets.

157 3. Provide recommendations for the operation and
158 administration of the museums.

159 4. Ensure that each museum is operated as a hybrid model
160 by a nonprofit entity in combination with the respective county
161 commission, which may include a state agency, a local
162 governmental entity, or a college or university.

163 5. Consider relevant operational models, including the:

164 a. Avron B. Fogelman Sports Museum in Boca Raton.

165 b. Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in
166 Detroit, Michigan.

167 c. Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville.

168 e. Harvey B. Gantt Center for African American Arts and
169 Culture in Charlotte, North Carolina.

170 f. John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota.

171 g. Meek-Eaton Black Archives, Research Center and Museum
172 in Tallahassee.

173 h. Museum of Florida History in Tallahassee.

174 i. National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee.

175 j. Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum in Miami.

176 6. Develop a collections management policy to care for,
177 preserve, and curate the museums' collections as well as
178 collections that may be loaned to the museums.

179 7. Develop and maintain curatorial policies and practices
180 consistent with generally accepted professional museum
181 standards, including collections management, exhibition
182 development, research, and interpretation. Qualified
183 professionals shall make curatorial decisions in accordance with
184 such standards and applicable law. Oversight by governing bodies
185 shall apply only to matters of fiscal accountability, public
186 transparency, and compliance with state requirements. Such
187 oversight shall not extend to the review, approval, or direction
188 of specific curatorial content, exhibitions, or interpretive
189 materials.

190 (d) The Florida Museum of History Advisory Committee shall
191 make recommendations that include educational materials relating
192 to the role of African American participation in defending and
193 preserving this state and the United States, including the
194 contributions of the residents of Fort Mose, the Tuskegee
195 Airmen, and African-American veterans.

196 (3) (a) Each county commission, in partnership with the
197 designated local entity, must create a Florida Museum of History
198 Board for each museum in Orange, St. Johns, and Miami-Dade
199 Counties. Each county commission, in partnership with the
200 designated local entity, shall appoint no more than 11 members

201 to the board governing that museum. Each member must have
202 experience in at least one of the following areas:

- 203 1. Florida History or Black History;
- 204 2. Museum curation;
- 205 3. Architecture;
- 206 4. Museum design; or
- 207 5. Philanthropy.

208 (b) Each Florida Museum of History Board shall appoint an
209 operating board of directors, consisting of scholarly experts
210 and other key stakeholders representing community organizations,
211 to provide program support for each museum.

212 (4) Each Florida Museum of History Board, in consultation
213 with the respective county commission, shall:

214 (a) Develop a plan for the museum to acquire archival
215 materials and artifacts.

216 (b) Develop plans for permanent and temporary exhibitions
217 in consultation with colleagues from other institutions and
218 external content experts.

219 (c) Develop programs and educational materials, including
220 topics that support the mission of the Florida Museum of
221 History, in consultation with the Department of Education and
222 other external stakeholders.

223 (d) Provide educational materials that complement and
224 support required history instruction provided in public schools
225 in accordance with s. 1003.42(2)(h), Florida Statutes.

226 (e) Create a transition plan for the museum to become
227 financially self-sufficient.

228 (5) The Florida Museum of History Advisory Committee, in
229 partnership with the designated local entities, the Florida
230 Tourism Marketing Corporation, and the local visitor and
231 convention bureaus, shall develop and execute a marketing plan
232 to promote each Florida Museum of History. The designated local
233 entities may collaborate with local destination marketing
234 organizations or convention and visitors bureaus.

235 **Section 2.** (1) The Legislature shall provide at least \$1
236 million each to the county commissions of Orange, St. Johns, and
237 Miami-Dade Counties to conduct a financial feasibility study for
238 each respective Florida Museum of History location. In each such
239 location, the financial feasibility study shall:

240 (a) Evaluate the visitation potential, infrastructure
241 readiness, and financial sustainability of the area.

242 (b) Evaluate each location's capacity to match at least 50
243 percent of funding provided by the Legislature, using public,
244 philanthropic, or private sources.

245 (c) Assess the likelihood that the location will become
246 financially self-sufficient within 3 years after the museum's
247 opening, without additional financial support from the
248 Legislature.

249 (d) Be used to determine the appropriate size and the
250 square footage of the museums for each respective location based

251 on tourism markets, funding capacity, funding availability,
252 operational sustainability, and ensure adequate capacity for
253 robust programming and future expansion.

254 (2) (a) The construction of each Florida Museum of History
255 shall be funded by both local and state appropriations.

256 (b) The Legislature shall appropriate no more than \$75
257 million for the construction of the Florida Museums of History.
258 Each location may qualify for up to one-third of the funds
259 provided by the state.

260 (c) Each county commission, in partnership with its
261 designated local entity, shall match at least 50 percent of
262 funding provided by the Legislature, using public,
263 philanthropic, or private sources.

264 (d) Estimates for recurring operational costs shall be
265 developed during the building design, site development, and
266 construction process.

267 (e) In addition to receiving funds as set forth in
268 paragraph (a), the Florida Museum of History Board shall seek to
269 raise private funds, gifts, donations, and solicit grants, to
270 augment any recurring funding received. The museum shall earn
271 revenue from general admission fees, ticketed programming and
272 events, retail partnerships, and facility rentals. An endowment
273 shall be created to support the acquisition, research, and care
274 of collections obtained from across the network of museums that
275 exist in this state.

276 **Section 3.** (1) The Florida Museum of History is intended
277 to be a leading world-class cultural arts and history museum,
278 and must consist of:

279 (a) At least 10,000 square feet of exhibition space
280 capable of supporting all the functions of a leading world-class
281 museum, including collections care and storage, exhibits,
282 programs, large public events, large rental events, and a
283 repository for genealogical and archival materials with
284 appropriate space for public research.

285 (b) An archival and storage facility for items donated to
286 the Florida Museum of History at each location, as well as
287 historical documents and items and educational materials.

288 (2) Each Florida Museum of History Board must ensure that
289 at least 33 percent of the museum's exhibition space is
290 dedicated to the history of this state, including:

291 (a) The history and impact of tourism, including
292 attractions, historical sites, and tourist destinations such as
293 Disney World, Silver Springs, Universal Studios, and this
294 state's beaches.

295 (b) The history and presence of the United States
296 military, including military bases and installations in the
297 state.

298 (c) The history and impact of agriculture on the state's
299 economy.

300 (d) The history of space exploration and the impact of the

301 National Aeronautics and Space Administration and related
302 activities on this state.

303 (3) Each Florida Museum of History Board must consider
304 creating exhibition halls and spaces for:

305 (a) Florida's African American museums.

306 (b) Florida's Hispanic museums.

307 (c) Florida's Jewish Holocaust museums.

308 (d) African Americans in the military.

309 (e) African Americans and women in aviation.

310 (f) African Americans and women in space.

311 (g) The history of slavery and the Civil Rights Movement
312 in this state and the United States.

313 (h) An exhibition hall of life-sized statues or a statue
314 garden of significant individuals in the history of this state
315 and the United States.

316 (i) A library and archives of this state's Governors to
317 include 3D-printed life-sized statues of the Governors.

318 (j) A Presidential Hall of Statues.

319 (k) The history of the Civil War in this state.

320 (l) The history of reconstruction in this state.

321 (m) The impact of Henry Morrison Flagler in this state.

322 (n) A portrait gallery featuring portraits of historical
323 and significant individuals who have impacted Florida.

324 (o) The history of Black towns, cities, and settlements in
325 this state.

326 (p) The history of the migration of the citizens of the
327 Caribbean to this state, including Cubans, Haitians, and
328 Jamaicans.

329 (q) A portrait gallery and archives of Black and Hispanic
330 elected officials in this state.

331 (r) The history of Historically Black Colleges and
332 Universities in this state, including the life of Mary McCleod
333 Bethune and Bethune Cookman University, and the United States.

334 (s) A gallery of Black art that includes paintings,
335 posters, prints, glass works, quilts, and figurines.

336 (t) The history of Orange County, St. Johns County, or
337 Miami-Dade County.

338 (u) The history of the Town of Eatonville and author Zora
339 Neale Hurston.

340 (v) Historically significant and influential persons
341 including artists, musicians, poets, and athletes, and
342 historical events, including Black History events in this state
343 and the United States.

344 (w) The history of Black entrepreneurs, scientists,
345 inventors and inventions in this state and the United States.

346 (x) The history of the Tuskegee Airmen and the history of
347 the Tuskegee Airmen in this state.

348 (y) The history of baseball in this state, including the
349 major leagues, the Negro Baseball League, the minor leagues, and
350 spring training.

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351 (z) The impact of Cuban immigrants in this state.

352 **Section 4.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.