

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 Community Affairs

BILL: SB 308

INTRODUCER: Senator Leek

SUBJECT: Florida Museum of Black History

DATE: December 1, 2025

REVISED: _____

ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1. Shuler	Fleming	CA	Pre-meeting
2. _____	_____	GO	_____
3. _____	_____	RC	_____

I. Summary:

SB 308 specifies legislative intent recognizing the designation of St. Johns County for the Florida Museum of Black History by the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force.

The bill establishes and specifies the membership of a board of directors to oversee the commission, construction, operation, and administration of the museum. The board is directed to work with the Foundation for the Museum of Black History, Inc., in its duties. The St. Johns Board of County Commissioners is directed to provide administrative assistance and staffing to the board of directors until the planning, design, and engineering of the museum are completed.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2026.

II. Present Situation:

Department of State

The Department of State (DOS), created in s. 20.10, F.S., is composed of six divisions: Elections, Historical Resources, Corporations, Library and Information Services, Arts and Culture, and Administration. The head of the DOS is the Secretary of State (Secretary). The Secretary is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Governor and is confirmed by the Senate. The Secretary performs functions conferred by the State Constitution upon the custodian of state records.¹ The Secretary also serves as the state protocol officer and, in consultation with the Governor and other governmental officials, develops, maintains, publishes, and distributes the state protocol manual.²

¹ Section 20.10(1), F.S.

² Section 15.01(1), F.S.

Division of Historical Resources

The DOS's Division of Historical Resources (division) is responsible for preserving and promoting Florida's historical archaeological resources.³ The division Director's Office oversees a Historic Preservation Grants program to help preserve and maintain Florida's historic buildings and archaeological sites and coordinates outreach programs.⁴ The division Director also serves as the State Historic Preservation Officer, acting as the liaison with the national historic preservation program conducted by the National Park Service.⁵

The division is comprised of the following Bureaus:

- Bureau of Historic Preservation;
- Bureau of Historical Museums; and
- Bureau of Archeological Research.⁶

The division is also responsible for encouraging, promoting, maintaining, and operating Florida history museums.⁷ The division provides support to museums and works to promote the use of resources for educational and cultural purposes. The division directly oversees the following museums:

- Museum of Florida History, which is the state's official history museum and showcases Florida's diverse history from prehistoric times to the present day;⁸
- Mission San Luis, a living history museum that showcases the life of the Apalachee Indians and Spanish settlers, and also hosts workshops such as pottery and blacksmithing;⁹
- Knott House Museum, which showcases the history of Tallahassee and its role in the civil war including the Emancipation Proclamation being read on the steps of the house in 1865;¹⁰ and
- The Grove Museum, which showcases the life of the Call and Collins families, who owned the property and played a significant role in Florida's history including contributions in agriculture, civil rights, and politics.¹¹

Other museums recognized by the state include:

- Certain state railroad museums;¹²
- The Florida Museum of Transportation and History;¹³
- The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art;¹⁴

³ See s. 267.031, F.S.

⁴ Section 267.0617, F.S. See also Fla. Dep't of State, *Grants*, <https://dos.fl.gov/historical/grants/> (last visited Nov. 21, 2025).

⁵ Fla. Dep't of State, *About*, <https://dos.myflorida.com/historical/about/> (last visited Nov. 21, 2025); see also s. 267.031, F.S.

⁶ Fla. Dep't of State, *About*, <https://dos.myflorida.com/historical/about/> (last visited Nov. 21, 2025).

⁷ Section 267.071(2), F.S.

⁸ *Id.*; see also Fla. Dep't of State, *Museum of Florida History*, <https://museumoffloridahistory.com/explore/exhibits/> (last visited Nov. 21, 2025).

⁹ See Fla. Dep't of State, *Visit Mission San Luis*, <https://missionsanluis.org/visit/> (last visited Nov. 21, 2025).

¹⁰ See Fla. Dep't of State, *About the Knott House*, <https://museumoffloridahistory.com/visit/knott-house-museum/about-the-knott-house/> (last visited Nov. 21, 2025).

¹¹ See Fla. Dep't of State, *The Grove Museum*, <https://thegrovemuseum.com/> (last visited Nov. 21, 2025). The Grove Advisory Council advises the division on the operation, maintenance, and preservation of the museum. S. 267.075, F.S.

¹² See s. 15.045, F.S.

¹³ Section 15.046, F.S.

¹⁴ See ss. 265.27 and 1004.45, F.S.

- The Ringling Museum of the Circus;¹⁵
- The Florida Historic Capitol Museum;¹⁶
- The Florida Agricultural Legacy Learning Center;¹⁷ and
- The Florida Museum of Natural History.¹⁸

Florida Museum of Black History Task Force

In the 2023 Session, the Legislature passed CS/CS/HB 1441 which provided for the creation of the Black History Task Force within the division for the purposes of providing recommendations for the planning, construction, operation, and administration of a Florida Museum of Black History.¹⁹ The task force was comprised of nine members, three each appointed by the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House, all of whom served without compensation.²⁰

The task force was directed to develop:

- Plans for the location, design, and construction of the museum.
- Recommendations for the operation and administration of the museum.
- A marketing plan to promote the museum.
- A transition plan for the museum to become financially self-sufficient.
- Recommendations for archival and artifact acquisition, preservation, and research; exhibits; and educational materials, which were required to include materials relating to:
 - The role of African-American participation in defending and preserving Florida and the United States, including the contributions of the residents of Fort Mose, the Tuskegee Airmen, and all African-American veterans.
 - The history of slavery in the state.
 - The history of segregation in the state.
 - Notable African Americans in the state.
 - Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, including the founding of Bethune Cookman University.
 - The history of historically black colleges and universities in this state.
 - The inherent worth and dignity of human life, with a focus on the prevention of genocide.²¹

¹⁵ Section 1004.45, F.S.

¹⁶ Section 272.129, F.S. The Florida Historic Capitol Museum Council provides guidance and support to the museum director and support staff. S. 272.131, F.S.

¹⁷ Section 570.692, F.S.

¹⁸ Section 1004.56, F.S.

¹⁹ The bill was signed into law by Governor DeSantis on May 11, 2023, and became ch. 2023-72, Laws of Fla., and was codified at s. 267.0722, F.S.

²⁰ The members were Sen. Geraldine Thompson, Chair, appointed by Senate President Passidomo; Brian M. Butler, appointed by Governor DeSantis; Howard M. Holley, Sr., appointed by Speaker Renner; Rep. Berny Jacques, appointed by Governor DeSantis; Tony Lee, Ed.D., appointed by Governor DeSantis; Rep. Kiyan Michael, appointed by Speaker Renner; Gayle Phillips, appointed by Speaker Renner; Sen. Bobby Powell, appointed by Senate President Passidomo; and Dr. Nashid Madyun, appointed by Senate President Passidomo. Fla. Dep't of State, *The Florida Museum of Black History Task Force*, <https://dos.fl.gov/historical/museums/blackhistorytaskforce/> (last visited Nov. 21, 2025).

²¹ Section 267.0722(4), F.S.

The task force was required to submit a report to the Governor and Legislature before July 1, 2024, detailing its plans. After the task force submitted the report, the task force was required to disband.²²

Final Report of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force

Between September 25, 2023, and June 28, 2024, the task force conducted ten public meetings. The public meetings consisted of presentations from staff, experts, and various community stakeholders. The task force also solicited input from Florida residents and visitors through a survey that gathered responses from over 4,000 individuals. The task force developed their recommendations based on the requirements of s. 267.0722, F.S., and information provided from meeting presentations, public comment, and the survey.²³

The Final Report was adopted by the task force at its final meeting on June 28, 2024.²⁴ The principal topic examined by the Task Force was the most appropriate location to recommend for the future Florida Museum of Black History. The task force heard presentations on potential locations beginning with its October 26, 2023, meeting. To aid the task force in recommending the most appropriate location, staff were asked by the task force to develop Location Selection Criteria to score locations. The Task Force's final ranking list based on these scores was: St. Augustine/St. Johns County with a score of 96.78; Eatonville/Orange County with a score of 95.33, and Opa-locka with a score of 84.89. The task force voted at its May 21, 2024, meeting to recommend St. Augustine/St. Johns County as the site for the future Florida Museum of Black History.²⁵

As required by s. 267.0722, F.S., the task force also included in the Final Report substantive recommendations for design and construction of the museum, operation, administration, and marketing of the museum, as well as recommendations for exhibits and materials to include in the museum.²⁶

Proposed site of the Florida Museum of Black History in St. Johns County

Supplemental materials included in the Final Report produced by the task force highlighted the extensive historical heritage of St. Johns County, including the Historic Downtown of St. Augustine.²⁷ St. Johns County hosts over 10 million visitors and tourists annually seeking to visit numerous historic sites such as Fort Mose, the first legally sanctioned, free African American settlement in the nation.²⁸

²² Section 267.0722(6), F.S.

²³ Fla. Museum of Black History Task Force, *Final Report*, (June 28, 2024) at 2-3, <https://files.floridados.gov/media/708141/fmbhtf-report-062824-final-compressed.pdf> (last visited Nov. 21, 2025).

²⁴ Fla. Dep't of State, *The Florida Museum of Black History Task Force*, <https://dos.fl.gov/historical/museums/blackhistorytaskforce/> (last visited Nov. 21, 2025).

²⁵ Fla. Museum of Black History Task Force, *Final Report*, (June 28, 2024) at 4-6, <https://files.floridados.gov/media/708141/fmbhtf-report-062824-final-compressed.pdf> (last visited Nov. 21, 2025).

²⁶ *See id.*

²⁷ Fla. Museum of Black History Task Force, *Final Report*, (June 28, 2024) <https://files.floridados.gov/media/708141/fmbhtf-report-062824-final-compressed.pdf> (last visited Nov. 21, 2025).

²⁸ *Id.*; see also Fort Mose Historical Society, *The Fort Mose Story*, <https://fortmose.org/about-fort-mose/> (last visited Nov. 24, 2025).

The County has formed a partnership with Florida Memorial University (FMU), a historically black university, to curate a property that is 2.5 miles away from the center of Historic Downtown St. Augustine.²⁹ The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners voted on April 16, 2024, to negotiate an agreement with FMU to develop a museum on the FMU campus.³⁰ The site is a 14.5 acre site that is the former home of FMU, then known as the Florida Normal & Industrial Institute.³¹ The Florida Normal and Industrial Institute came to St. Augustine in 1918, originating through a merger of two previously distinct institutions dedicated to serving former slaves and their descendants.³²

Foundation for the Museum of Black History, Inc.

The Foundation for the Museum of Black History, Inc., is a corporation not-for-profit formed under ch. 617, F.S., and operated for charitable purposes under s. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.³³ The Foundation was formed in October of 2024 for the purposes of assisting the community with planning and fundraising initiatives to support the design and construction of the Florida Museum of Black History in St. Johns County and planning projects and events to facilitate fundraising efforts for the creation of the Museum.³⁴

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 308 creates s. 267.07221, F.S., to specify legislative intent recognizing the work of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force in selecting a location for the museum and designating St. Johns County as the site for the museum. Additionally, the bill specifies legislative intent to establish a board of directors of oversee the commission, construction, operation, and administration of the museum.

The bill establishes the Florida Museum of Black History Board of Directors within the Division of Historical Resources. The bill specifies the membership of the board of directors and requires the appointments to be made by July 31, 2026. Unless the members are classified as ex officio, they may not hold state or local elective office while serving on the board. Vacancies must be filled in the same manner as the original appointments were. The membership of the board is to be composed of:

- Three individuals appointed by the Governor, one of whom shall serve as chair.
- Three individuals appointed by the President of the Senate.

²⁹ Fla. Museum of Black History Task Force, *Final Report*, (June 28, 2024) <https://files.floridados.gov/media/708141/fmbhtf-report-062824-final-compressed.pdf> (last visited Nov. 24, 2025).

³⁰ St. Johns Cultural Council, *Florida Museum of Black History Task Force Recommends St. Johns County to Governor's Office as the Location of State's First Black History Museum*, (July 1, 2024) <https://stjohnsculture.com/news/florida-museum-of-black-history-task-force-recommends-st-johns-county-to-governors-office-as-the-location-of-states-first-black-history-museum/> (last visited Nov. 24, 2025).

³¹ Florida Memorial University, *Proposed Location of Black History Museum in St. Augustine*, (April 23, 2024), <https://www.fmu.edu/proposed-location-of-black-history-museum-in-st-augustine/> (last visited Nov. 24, 2025).

³² St. Johns Cultural Council, *AL Lewis Archway: Florida Normal & Industrial Institute*, <https://historiccoastculture.com/venue/al-lewis-archway-florida-normal-industrial-institute/> (last visited Nov. 24, 2025).

³³ *Articles of Incorporation of The Foundation for the Museum of Black History, Inc.*, (Oct. 21, 2024) <https://search.sunbiz.org/Inquiry/CorporationSearch/ConvertTiffToPDF?storagePath=COR%5C2024%5C1115%5C00369832.Tif&documentNumber=N24000013011> (last visited Nov. 24, 2025).

³⁴ *Id.*

- Two members of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate and serving ex officio.
- Three individuals appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- Two members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and serving ex officio.

The board of directors is directed to work with the Foundation for the Museum of Black History, Inc., in overseeing the commission, construction, operation, and administration of the museum. The St. Johns Board of County Commissioners is directed to provide administrative assistance and staffing to the board of directors until the planning, design, and engineering of the museum are completed.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2026.

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:

Article VII, s. 19 of the State Constitution requires that legislation that increases or creates taxes or fees be passed by a 2/3 vote of each chamber in a bill with no other subject. The bill does not increase or create new taxes or fees. Thus, the constitutional requirements related to new or increased taxes or fees do not apply.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None identified.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

Lines 54-57 require the St. Johns Board of County Commissioners to provide administrative assistance and staffing to the Florida Museum of Black History Board of Directors. The county can likely accomplish this within existing resources, so any associated costs should be negligible.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

It may be more appropriate for a state entity, such as the Department of State, to provide administrative support to the board of directors, as opposed to a county.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill creates section 267.07221 of the Florida Statutes.

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.