

HB 881

2026

A bill to be entitled
An act relating to pari-mutuel wagering; amending s. 550.01215, F.S.; authorizing certain permitholders to choose not to conduct live racing; providing that certain permitholders are not required to pay a specified tax; requiring certain permitholders to continue to conduct live racing until specified notice is provided to the Florida Gaming Control Commission; providing requirements for such notice; requiring certain notifications when permitholders are relocating; amending s. 550.054, F.S.; providing that thoroughbred racing permits may be transferred upon authorization of the commission; removing a requirement for certain referendums; amending s. 550.09515, F.S.; removing a requirement that certain permits escheat to the state following nonpayment of taxes; amending s. 550.3345, F.S.; revising the entity that designates certain members of the board of directors of a specified not-for-profit corporation; revising the circumstances under which certain permitholders may relocate; amending s. 550.475, F.S.; revising when certain permitholders may lease certain facilities and training centers; prohibiting certain relocating permitholders from operating cardrooms in leased training centers; authorizing

26 certain lessors to remain eligible facilities;
27 amending ss. 550.5251 and 550.6335, F.S.; conforming
28 provisions to changes made by the act; providing an
29 effective date.

30

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

32

33 **Section 1. Paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection (1) of**
34 Section 550.01215, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

35 550.01215 License application; periods of operation;
36 license fees; bond.—

37 (1) Each permitholder shall annually, during the period
38 between January 15 and February 4, file in writing with the
39 commission its application for an operating license for a pari-
40 mutuel facility for the conduct of pari-mutuel wagering during
41 the next state fiscal year, including intertrack and simulcast
42 race wagering. Each application for live performances must
43 specify the number, dates, and starting times of all live
44 performances that the permitholder intends to conduct. It must
45 also specify which performances will be conducted as charity or
46 scholarship performances.

47 (a) Each application for an operating license also must
48 include:

49 1. For each permitholder, whether the permitholder intends
50 to accept wagers on intertrack or simulcast events.

51 2. For each permitholder that elects to operate a
52 cardroom, the dates and periods of operation the permitholder
53 intends to operate the cardroom.

54 3. For each thoroughbred ~~racing~~ permitholder that elects
55 to receive or rebroadcast out-of-state races, the dates for all
56 performances that the permitholder intends to conduct.

57 (b)1. A greyhound permitholder may not conduct live
58 racing. A thoroughbred permitholder, jai alai permitholder,
59 harness horse racing permitholder, or quarter horse racing
60 permitholder may elect not to conduct live racing or games. ~~A~~
61 ~~thoroughbred permitholder must conduct live racing.~~ A
62 thoroughbred permitholder, greyhound permitholder, jai alai
63 permitholder, harness horse racing permitholder, or quarter
64 horse racing permitholder that does not conduct live racing or
65 games retains its permit; is a pari-mutuel facility as defined
66 in s. 550.002(23); if such permitholder has been issued a slot
67 machine license, the facility where such permit is located
68 remains an eligible facility as defined in s. 551.102(4),
69 continues to be eligible for a slot machine license pursuant to
70 s. 551.104(3), and is exempt from ss. 551.104(4)(c) and (10) and
71 551.114(2); is eligible, but not required, to be a guest track
72 and, if the permitholder is a harness horse racing permitholder,
73 to be a host track for purposes of intertrack wagering and
74 simulcasting pursuant to ss. 550.3551, 550.615, 550.625, and
75 550.6305; and remains eligible for a cardroom license exempt

HB 881

2026

76 from requirements of s. 849.0876(5) and is not required to pay
77 the tax under s. 849.086(13). A thoroughbred permitholder who
78 operates a slot machine facility or cardroom shall offer a full
79 schedule of live racing until such permitholder notifies the
80 commission that it will no longer offer live racing. Notice
81 under this subparagraph is not valid unless delivered on or
82 after July 1, 2027, and contains the date on which the
83 permitholder will no longer offer live racing, which may not be
84 earlier than 3 years after the date of the notice. The
85 permitholder is required to deliver such notice when relocating
86 under to s. 550.3345 or s. 550.475 with authorization by the
87 commission in accordance with s. 550.054.

88 2. A permitholder or licensee may not conduct live
89 greyhound racing or dogracing in connection with any wager for
90 money or any other thing of value in the state. The commission
91 may deny, suspend, or revoke any permit or license under this
92 chapter if a permitholder or licensee conducts live greyhound
93 racing or dogracing in violation of this subparagraph. In
94 addition to, or in lieu of, denial, suspension, or revocation of
95 such permit or license, the commission may impose a civil
96 penalty of up to \$5,000 against the permitholder or licensee for
97 a violation of this subparagraph. All penalties imposed and
98 collected must be deposited with the Chief Financial Officer to
99 the credit of the General Revenue Fund.

100 **Section 2. Subsection (13) of section 550.054, Florida**

HB 881

2026

101 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

102 550.054 Application for permit to conduct pari-mutuel
103 wagering.—

104 (13) ~~(a)~~ Notwithstanding any provisions of this chapter, a
105 ~~no~~ thoroughbred horse racing permit or license issued under this
106 chapter may ~~shall~~ be transferred, or reissued when such
107 reissuance is in the nature of a transfer so as to permit or
108 authorize a licensee to change the location of a thoroughbred
109 horse racetrack ~~except upon~~ authorization by ~~proof in such form~~
110 ~~as the commission may prescribe that a referendum election has~~
111 ~~been held:~~

112 1. ~~If the proposed new location is within the same county~~
113 ~~as the already licensed location, in the county where the~~
114 ~~licensee desires to conduct the race meeting and that a majority~~
115 ~~of the electors voting on that question in such election voted~~
116 ~~in favor of the transfer of such license.~~

117 2. ~~If the proposed new location is not within the same~~
118 ~~county as the already licensed location, in the county where the~~
119 ~~licensee desires to conduct the race meeting and in the county~~
120 ~~where the licensee is already licensed to conduct the race~~
121 ~~meeting and that a majority of the electors voting on that~~
122 ~~question in each such election voted in favor of the transfer of~~
123 ~~such license.~~

124 (b) ~~Each referendum held under the provisions of this~~
125 ~~subsection shall be held in accordance with the electoral~~

126 ~~procedures for ratification of permits, as provided in s. 550.0651. The expense of each such referendum shall be borne by the licensee requesting the transfer.~~

129 **Section 3. Paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section 550.09515, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

131 550.09515 Thoroughbred horse taxes; reissuance of
132 ~~abandoned interest in a permit~~ following ~~for~~ nonpayment of taxes.—

134 (3) (a) The permit of a thoroughbred ~~horse~~ permitholder
135 conducting live thoroughbred performances who does not pay tax
136 on handle for live thoroughbred horse performances for a full
137 schedule of live races during any 2 consecutive state fiscal
138 years shall be void and shall not be reissued ~~escheat to and~~
139 ~~become the property of the state~~ unless such failure to operate
140 and pay tax on handle was the direct result of fire, strike,
141 war, or other disaster or event beyond the ability of the
142 permitholder to control. Financial hardship to the permitholder
143 shall not, in and of itself, constitute just cause for failure
144 to operate and pay tax on handle.

145 **Section 4. Paragraph (d) of subsection (2) of section 550.3345, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

147 550.3345 Conversion of quarter horse permit to a limited
148 thoroughbred permit.—

149 (2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the holder
150 of a quarter horse racing permit issued under s. 550.334 may,

151 within 1 year after the effective date of this section, apply to
152 the commission for a transfer of the quarter horse racing permit
153 to a not-for-profit corporation formed under state law to serve
154 the purposes of the state as provided in subsection (1). The
155 board of directors of the not-for-profit corporation must be
156 comprised of 11 members, 4 of whom shall be designated by the
157 applicant, 4 of whom shall be designated by the commission
158 ~~Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association~~, and 3 of whom shall
159 be designated by the other 8 directors, with at least 1 of these
160 3 members being an authorized representative of another
161 thoroughbred permitholder in this state. The not-for-profit
162 corporation shall submit an application to the commission for
163 review and approval of the transfer in accordance with s.
164 550.054. Upon approval of the transfer by the commission, and
165 notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the
166 not-for-profit corporation may, within 1 year after its receipt
167 of the permit, request that the commission convert the quarter
168 horse racing permit to a permit authorizing the holder to
169 conduct pari-mutuel wagering meets of thoroughbred racing.
170 Neither the transfer of the quarter horse racing permit nor its
171 conversion to a limited thoroughbred permit shall be subject to
172 the mileage limitation or the ratification election as set forth
173 under s. 550.054(2) or s. 550.0651. Upon receipt of the request
174 for such conversion, the commission shall timely issue a
175 converted permit. The converted permit and the not-for-profit

HB 881

2026

176 corporation shall be subject to the following requirements:

177 (d) Racing under the permit may take place only at the
178 location for which the original quarter horse racing permit was
179 issued, which may be leased by the not-for-profit corporation
180 for that purpose; however, the not-for-profit corporation may,
181 without the conduct of any ratification election pursuant to s.
182 550.054(13) or s. 550.0651, move the location of the permit to
183 another location in a ~~the same~~ county which has previously
184 authorized pari-mutuel wagering provided that such relocation is
185 approved under the zoning and land use regulations of the
186 applicable county or municipality.

187 **Section 5. Section 550.475, Florida Statutes, is amended
188 to read:**

189 550.475 Lease of pari-mutuel facilities by pari-mutuel
190 permitholders.—

191 (1) Holders of valid pari-mutuel permits for the conduct
192 of any pari-mutuel wagering in this state are entitled to lease
193 any and all of the ~~their~~ facilities of ~~to~~ any other holder of a
194 ~~same class~~ valid pari-mutuel permit or a thoroughbred training
195 center holding a valid license issued by the commission, when
196 located within a 50-mile ~~35-mile~~ radius of each other; and such
197 lessee is entitled to a permit and license to conduct intertrack
198 wagering and operate its race meet or jai alai games at the
199 leased premises.

200 (2) Thoroughbred permitholders relocating pursuant to s.

HB 881

2026

201 550.3345 or s. 550.475 in accordance with s. 550.054 may not
202 operate a cardroom at a leased training center.

203 (3) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, the
204 lessor of a pari-mutuel facility that has been issued a slot
205 machine license or a cardroom license shall remain an eligible
206 facility as defined in s. 551.102(4).

207 **Section 6. Subsection (1) of section 550.5251, Florida**
208 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

209 550.5251 Florida thoroughbred racing; certain permits;
210 operating days.—

211 (1) Each thoroughbred permitholder required to offer live
212 racing shall annually, during the period commencing January 15
213 of each year and ending February 4 of the following year, file
214 in writing with the commission its application to conduct one or
215 more thoroughbred racing meetings during the thoroughbred racing
216 season commencing on the following July 1. Each application
217 shall specify the number and dates of all performances that the
218 permitholder intends to conduct during that thoroughbred racing
219 season. On or before April 15 of each year, the commission shall
220 issue a license authorizing each permitholder to conduct
221 performances on the dates specified in its application. Up to
222 March 28 of each year, each permitholder may request and shall
223 be granted changes in its application to conduct performances;
224 but thereafter, as a condition precedent to the validity of its
225 license and its right to retain its permit, each permitholder

HB 881

2026

226 must operate the full number of days authorized on each of the
227 dates set forth in its license.

228 **Section 7. Subsection (2) of section 550.6335, Florida
229 Statutes, is amended to read:**

230 550.6335 Surcharge.—

231 (2) A thoroughbred horse permitholder that accepts wagers
232 on out-of-state races may impose a surcharge on each winning
233 ticket, or interstate pool, on such out-of-state race in an
234 amount not to exceed 5 percent of each winning pari-mutuel
235 winning ticket cashed. If a permitholder rebroadcasts such
236 signal and elects to impose a surcharge, the surcharge shall be
237 imposed on any winning ticket at any guest facility at the same
238 rate as the surcharge on wagers accepted at its own facility.

239 The proceeds from the surcharge shall be distributed as follows:
240 if the wager is made at the host facility, then one-half of the
241 proceeds shall be retained by the host permitholder and one-half
242 shall be paid as purses at the host facility; if the wager is
243 made at a guest facility, then one-half shall be retained by the
244 guest permitholder, one-quarter shall be paid to the host
245 permitholder, and one-quarter shall be paid as purses at the
246 host facility.

247

248 Any surcharge taken under this section must be calculated after
249 breakage is deducted from the wagering pool.

250 **Section 8.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.