

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to pari-mutuel wagering; amending s.
3 550.01215, F.S.; authorizing certain permitholders to
4 choose not to conduct live racing; requiring certain
5 permitholders to continue to conduct live racing until
6 specified notice is provided to the Florida Gaming
7 Control Commission; providing requirements for such
8 notice; requiring certain notifications when
9 permitholders are relocating; amending s. 550.054,
10 F.S.; providing that thoroughbred racing permits may
11 be transferred upon authorization of the commission;
12 removing a requirement for certain referendums;
13 amending s. 550.09515, F.S.; removing a requirement
14 that certain permits escheat to the state following
15 nonpayment of taxes; amending s. 550.3345, F.S.;
16 revising the entity that designates certain members of
17 the board of directors of a specified not-for-profit
18 corporation; revising the circumstances under which
19 certain permitholders may relocated; amending s.
20 550.475, F.S.; revising when certain permitholders may
21 lease certain facilities and training centers;
22 prohibiting certain relocating permitholders from
23 operating cardrooms in leased training centers;
24 authorizing certain lessors to remain eligible
25 facilities; amending ss. 550.5251 and 550.6335, F.S.;

26 conforming provisions to changes made by the act;
27 providing an effective date.
28

29 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
30

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

33 550.01215 License application; periods of operation;
34 license fees; bond.—

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

45 (a) Each application for an operating license also must
46 include:

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

49 2. For each permitholder that elects to operate a
50 cardroom, the dates and periods of operation the permitholder

51 intends to operate the cardroom.

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

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

76 such permitholder notifies the commission that it will no longer
77 offer live racing. Notice under this subparagraph is not valid
78 unless delivered on or after July 1, 2027, and contains the date
79 on which the permitholder will no longer offer live racing,
80 which may not be earlier than 3 years after the date of the
81 notice. The permitholder is required to deliver such notice when
82 relocating under to s. 550.3345 or s. 550.475 with authorization
83 by the commission in accordance with s. 550.054.

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

96 **Section 2. Subsection (13) of section 550.054, Florida**
97 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

98 550.054 Application for permit to conduct pari-mutuel
99 wagering.—

100 (13) ~~(a)~~ Notwithstanding any provisions of this chapter, a

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

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

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

120 (b) ~~Each referendum held under the provisions of this~~
121 ~~subsection shall be held in accordance with the electoral~~
122 ~~procedures for ratification of permits, as provided in s.~~
123 ~~550.0651. The expense of each such referendum shall be borne by~~
124 ~~the licensee requesting the transfer.~~

125 **Section 3. Paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section**

126 **550.09515, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

127 550.09515 Thoroughbred horse taxes; reissuance of
128 ~~abandoned interest in~~ a permit following ~~for~~ nonpayment of
129 taxes.—

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

141 **Section 4. Paragraph (d) of subsection (2) of section**
142 **550.3345, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

143 550.3345 Conversion of quarter horse permit to a limited
144 thoroughbred permit.—

145 (2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the holder
146 of a quarter horse racing permit issued under s. 550.334 may,
147 within 1 year after the effective date of this section, apply to
148 the commission for a transfer of the quarter horse racing permit
149 to a not-for-profit corporation formed under state law to serve
150 the purposes of the state as provided in subsection (1). The

board of directors of the not-for-profit corporation must be comprised of 11 members, 4 of whom shall be designated by the applicant, 4 of whom shall be designated by the commission ~~Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association~~, and 3 of whom shall be designated by the other 8 directors, with at least 1 of these 3 members being an authorized representative of another thoroughbred permitholder in this state. The not-for-profit corporation shall submit an application to the commission for review and approval of the transfer in accordance with s. 550.054. Upon approval of the transfer by the commission, and notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the not-for-profit corporation may, within 1 year after its receipt of the permit, request that the commission convert the quarter horse racing permit to a permit authorizing the holder to conduct pari-mutuel wagering meets of thoroughbred racing. Neither the transfer of the quarter horse racing permit nor its conversion to a limited thoroughbred permit shall be subject to the mileage limitation or the ratification election as set forth under s. 550.054(2) or s. 550.0651. Upon receipt of the request for such conversion, the commission shall timely issue a converted permit. The converted permit and the not-for-profit corporation shall be subject to the following requirements:

(d) Racing under the permit may take place only at the location for which the original quarter horse racing permit was issued, which may be leased by the not-for-profit corporation

for that purpose; however, the not-for-profit corporation may, without the conduct of any ratification election pursuant to s. 550.054(13) or s. 550.0651, move the location of the permit to another location in a ~~the same~~ county which has previously authorized pari-mutuel wagering provided that such relocation is approved under the zoning and land use regulations of the applicable county or municipality.

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

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

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

(2) Thoroughbred permitholders relocating pursuant to s. 550.3345 or s. 550.475 in accordance with s. 550.054 may not operate a cardroom at a leased training center.

(3) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, the lessor of a pari-mutuel facility that has been issued a slot

201 machine license or a cardroom license shall remain an eligible
202 facility as defined in s. 551.102(4).

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

205 550.5251 Florida thoroughbred racing; certain permits;
206 operating days.—

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

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

550.6335 Surcharge.—

(2) A thoroughbred ~~horse~~ permitholder that accepts wagers on out-of-state races may impose a surcharge on each winning ticket, or interstate pool, on such out-of-state race in an amount not to exceed 5 percent of each winning pari-mutuel winning ticket cashed. If a permitholder rebroadcasts such signal and elects to impose a surcharge, the surcharge shall be imposed on any winning ticket at any guest facility at the same rate as the surcharge on wagers accepted at its own facility. The proceeds from the surcharge shall be distributed as follows: if the wager is made at the host facility, then one-half of the proceeds shall be retained by the host permitholder and one-half shall be paid as purses at the host facility; if the wager is made at a guest facility, then one-half shall be retained by the guest permitholder, one-quarter shall be paid to the host permitholder, and one-quarter shall be paid as purses at the host facility.

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

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