

CS/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; 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 certain lessors to remain eligible 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:

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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 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

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

176 for that purpose; however, the not-for-profit corporation may,  
177 without the conduct of any ratification election pursuant to s.  
178 550.054(13) or s. 550.0651, move the location of the permit to  
179 another location in a the same county which has previously  
180 authorized pari-mutuel wagering provided that such relocation is  
181 approved under the zoning and land use regulations of the  
182 applicable county or municipality.

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

185 550.475 Lease of pari-mutuel facilities by pari-mutuel  
186 permitholders.—

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

196 (2) Thoroughbred permitholders relocating pursuant to s.  
197 550.3345 or s. 550.475 in accordance with s. 550.054 may not  
198 operate a cardroom at a leased training center.

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

CS/HB 881

2026

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:**

226 550.6335 Surcharge.—

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

243

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

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