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# Florida Politics

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## Greyhound bill passes FL House

By Kathleen Haughney  
April 26, 2011 04:13 PM

The Florida House Tuesday approved a bill would let greyhound race tracks off the hook when it comes to offering hundreds of live races per year.

Under the measure, approved by a 86-31 vote, greyhound track permit holders can decide how many – if any—races they will conduct per year, while still allowing the race tracks to offer other card games and slot machines. Under current law, the ability to run card games was tied to the greyhound racing, but track owners have said that they need the ability to set the number of races depending on their business earnings.

There are currently 14 greyhound racing tracks in Florida that also have card rooms, including ones in Palm Beach County, Mardi Gras and Miami.

Bill sponsor state Rep. Dana Young, R-Tampa, said that the greyhound racing industry has been declining for several years and the state has propped them up through mechanisms such as tax credits. But some lawmakers raised concerns though that the bill would expand gaming in the state of Florida, despite assurances from Young.

“Nothing in this bill expands gaming in any way,” she said.

State Rep. Dennis Baxley, R-Ocala, said he believed otherwise.

“All you’re doing is converting race tracks to card room casinos,” he said.

According to legislative analysis, the change could have a minor private sector impact. Depending on how much live racing is decreased or eliminated, greyhound breeders, owners and trainers could see a drop in demand for their services.

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### About the author



WILLIAM E. GIBSON, the Sun Sentinel's Washington correspondent for 27 years, has covered seven presidential elections and 14 sessions of Congress, always with South Florida readers in mind.

Originally from the Kansas City area, he lived in New Mexico, New York and Fort Lauderdale before moving to Washington. Along the way, he studied journalism at the University of Kansas and Columbia University.

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Why all the fuss? The people like to gamble. Their gambling interest have changed from dogs to cards and slots. Whats wrong with that?

Let the people play their games. Its their choice. Remember: Government of, by, and for the people.

The people who don't want to gamble are free to go and what they like to do.

If you would rather go sky-diving, go and have fun.

Remember were only here a short time. Live and let live.

justthinkn

Posted by: justthinkn | April 27, 2011 11:04 AM

Rep Young is full of crap. Pretty soon you will have slot machines in 7-11's and at the airports. The gaming was only supposed to be at the racetracks and this bill opens the door to let that go by the wayside.

Posted by: John | April 27, 2011 9:50 AM

As Rep. Young made clear in her closing statement, and as she has said throughout this process, this bill in no way expands gambling. In fact, it removes a mandate to conduct a type of gambling - dog racing. Therefore, arguments about a slippery slope and expanded gambling are misguided at best, scare tactics at worst.

Posted by: Eric Jackson | April 26, 2011 5:15 PM

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