

Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability

CS/HB 21 — Dozier School for Boys and Okeechobee School Victim Compensation Program

by Judiciary Committee and Reps. Salzman, Michael, and others (CS/CS/SB 24 by Fiscal Policy Committee; Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee; and Senators Rouson, Davis, Osgood, Burgess, Pizzo, Jones, Garcia, Torres, Stewart, Passidomo, Baxley, Book, Boyd, Bradley, Brodeur, Broxson, Burton, Calatayud, Collins, DiCeglie, Grall, Gruters, Harrell, Hooper, Hutson, Ingoglia, Martin, Mayfield, Perry, Polsky, Powell, Rodriguez, Simon, Thompson, Trumbull, Wright, Yarborough, and Berman)

The bill creates the “Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys and Okeechobee School Victim Compensation Program” to compensate living persons who were confined to those schools. The bill requires the Department of Legal Affairs (DLA) to accept, review, and approve or deny applications for the payment of compensation claims under the bill. An application must be made by a living person who was confined to the Dozier School for Boys or the Okeechobee School. The bill sets forth the requirements for the application. Applications for compensation must be submitted by December 31, 2024. Once a person is compensated under this bill, the person is ineligible for any further compensation related to the person’s confinement to the Dozier School for Boys or the Okeechobee School.

The bill authorizes the Commissioner of Education to award a standard high school diploma to a person compensated under this program if the person has not completed high school graduation requirements.

The bill appropriates \$20 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Legal Affairs for the Dozier School for Boys and Okeechobee School Victim Compensation Program.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor’s signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2024.

Vote: Senate 36-0; House 116-0