

By Senator Davis

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to the Florida Museum of History; authorizing the Department of State to partner with certain county commissions and local entities for a specified purpose; requiring that each Florida Museum of History be owned, managed, and operated by a certain entity; creating the Florida Museum of History Advisory Committee within the Department of State for a certain purpose; requiring the committee to operate in a manner consistent with certain provisions; providing membership and duties of the committee; requiring local entities to perform specified duties; requiring specified county commissions and local entities to create Florida Museum of History Boards; providing for membership and duties of the boards; requiring certain entities to develop and execute a marketing plan to promote each Florida Museum of History; authorizing designated local entities to collaborate with certain local organizations and bureaus; requiring the Legislature to provide specified funds to certain entities to conduct financial feasibility studies; providing requirements for such studies; requiring that construction of each museum be funded by specified appropriations; providing requirements for the structures and exhibitions of each Florida Museum of History; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, in 2023, the Legislature established the Florida

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30 Museum of Black History Task Force to identify, evaluate, and
31 recommend potential locations for a leading world-class museum
32 dedicated to preserving, interpreting, and celebrating the
33 history, culture, and contributions of Black Floridians and
34 Black Americans, and

35 WHEREAS, the task force received applications from multiple
36 jurisdictions and, in April 2024, adopted previously developed
37 rankings that narrowed the field from 13 potential sites to 3:
38 Eatonville in Orange County, St. Augustine in St. Johns County,
39 and Opa-locka in Miami-Dade County, and

40 WHEREAS, due to limited resources, incomplete data, and a
41 narrowing legislative deadline, the task force reaffirmed these
42 rankings without conducting new feasibility, financial, or
43 comparative analyses of the three potential sites, and

44 WHEREAS, the task force voted on May 21, 2024, to recommend
45 St. Augustine in St. Johns County as the site for the future
46 Florida Museum of Black History, and

47 WHEREAS, on June 30, 2024, the Division of Historical
48 Resources, with input from the task force, issued a report
49 describing the recommendation as a preliminary roadmap and
50 requesting additional legislative funding to support feasibility
51 and economic impact studies for each of the three top-ranked
52 locations, and

53 WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes that the task force
54 found no location with a clearly superior feasibility or
55 sustainability profile, underscoring the need for a
56 comprehensive, data-driven study before a final designation, and

57 WHEREAS, it is the intent of the Legislature that
58 comprehensive feasibility and economic impact studies be

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59 completed and reviewed for the three top-ranked locations, in
60 Orange County, St. Augustine in St. Johns County, and Opa-locka
61 in Miami-Dade County, before any final site designation,
62 construction authorization, or allocation of state funds, and

63 WHEREAS, these studies must evaluate visitation potential,
64 infrastructure readiness, financial sustainability, and the
65 demonstrated capacity of each locality to provide at least a 50
66 percent local funding match through public, philanthropic, or
67 private sources, and

68 WHEREAS, a world-class museum is characterized by its
69 extraordinary collection of historical items and a thoughtfully
70 curated visitor experience, and

71 WHEREAS, these institutions serve as vital repositories of
72 our shared heritage, actively shaping our understanding of the
73 past, present, and future, and

74 WHEREAS, a world-class museum is not defined by a big
75 building or a famous name, but is an unparalleled combination of
76 an extraordinary and meticulously preserved collection and an
77 unforgettable, thoughtfully curated visitor experience that
78 transcends mere viewing, inviting deep engagement and
79 reflection, and

80 WHEREAS, the Florida Museum of History is intended to be
81 more than a museum about slavery and the Civil Rights Movement
82 in America, and

83 WHEREAS, the Florida Museum of History is envisioned as a
84 unifying, cultural, and educational institution of statewide
85 significance, with the capacity to advance understanding, unity,
86 and economic opportunity for residents and visitors alike, and

87 WHEREAS, establishing and sustaining the Florida Museum of

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88 History will require a shared commitment from state, local, and
89 private partners, and

90 WHEREAS, at least 50 percent of total project funding
91 should come from local and regional public, philanthropic, and
92 private sources to ensure community ownership and fiscal
93 balance, and

94 WHEREAS, the Legislature finds that this partnership
95 structure, balancing state investment with strong local
96 commitment, is essential to ensure that the museum's
97 establishment is both equitable and fiscally responsible, and

98 WHEREAS, it is the intent of the Legislature that the
99 Florida Museum of History operate as a statewide institution
100 with collaborative governance that reflects Florida's geographic
101 and cultural diversity and fosters partnerships among local
102 governments, educational institutions, and cultural
103 organizations throughout this state, and

104 WHEREAS, the Legislature reaffirms its commitment to
105 supporting a museum that honors the history and achievements of
106 Black Floridians, advances public understanding, stimulates
107 tourism and economic opportunity, and stands as a lasting symbol
108 of unity and progress for future generations, NOW, THEREFORE,

109
110 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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112 Section 1. (1) The Department of State may partner with
113 the county commissions of Orange, St. Johns, and Miami-Dade
114 Counties and each local entity designated by the commissions to
115 design, construct, operate, and manage Florida Museums of
116 History in Orange, St. Johns, and Miami-Dade Counties. Once

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117 constructed, each Florida Museum of History must be owned,
118 managed, and operated by the local entity designated by the
119 respective county commission.

120 (2) (a) The Florida Museum of History Advisory Committee, a
121 committee as defined in s. 20.03, Florida Statutes, is created
122 within the Department of State to guide and assist with
123 planning, designing, and constructing each Florida Museum of
124 History. Except as otherwise provided in this section, the
125 committee shall operate in a manner consistent with s. 20.052,
126 Florida Statutes.

127 (b) The Florida Museum of History Advisory Committee shall
128 consist of the following members, who must have expertise in
129 Florida history, Black History, curation, architecture, and
130 museum design:

131 1. One member appointed by the Governor.
132 2. One member appointed by the President of the Senate.
133 3. One member appointed by the Speaker of the House of
134 Representatives.
135 4. One member appointed by the Secretary of the Department
136 of State.

137 5. The executive director of the Florida Tourism Industry
138 Marketing Corporation.

139 6. The chair and vice chair of the Florida Legislative
140 Black Caucus, who are not required to have expertise in Florida
141 history, Black History, curation, architecture, and museum
142 design. The chair and vice chair of the Florida Legislative
143 Black Caucus, in lieu of serving on the Florida Museum of
144 History Advisory Committee, may each appoint one person who has
145 expertise in Black History, Florida history, curation,

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146 architecture, and museum design to serve on the Florida Museum
147 of History Advisory Committee.

148 (c) The Florida Museum of History Advisory Committee, in
149 partnership with each designated local entity, shall provide
150 guidance and direction in choosing the architects, museum
151 designers, curators, and other contractors to design, construct,
152 operate, and manage each Florida Museum of History. To that end,
153 such local entities shall:

154 1. Procure architectural design services.

155 2. Procure construction management services based upon the
156 final architectural designs and construction budgets.

157 3. Provide recommendations for the operation and
158 administration of the museums.

159 4. Ensure that each museum is operated as a hybrid model by
160 a nonprofit entity in combination with the respective county
161 commission, which may include a state agency, a local
162 governmental entity, or a college or university.

163 5. Consider relevant operational models, including the:

164 a. Avron B. Fogelman Sports Museum in Boca Raton.

165 b. Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in
166 Detroit, Michigan.

167 c. Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville.

168 d. Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts +
169 Culture in Charlotte, North Carolina.

170 e. John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota.

171 f. Meek-Eaton Black Archives Research Center and Museum in
172 Tallahassee.

173 g. Museum of Florida History in Tallahassee.

174 h. National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee.

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175 i. Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum in Miami.
176 6. Develop a collections management policy to care for,
177 preserve, and curate the museums' collections, as well as
178 collections that may be loaned to the museums.
179 7. Develop and maintain curatorial policies and practices
180 consistent with generally accepted professional museum
181 standards, including collections management, exhibition
182 development, research, and interpretation. Qualified
183 professionals shall make curatorial decisions in accordance with
184 such standards and applicable law. Oversight by governing bodies
185 shall apply only to matters of fiscal accountability, public
186 transparency, and compliance with state requirements. Such
187 oversight shall not extend to the review, approval, or direction
188 of specific curatorial content, exhibitions, or interpretive
189 materials.

190 (d) The Florida Museum of History Advisory Committee shall
191 make recommendations that include educational materials relating
192 to the role of African-American participation in defending and
193 preserving this state and the United States, including the
194 contributions of the residents of Fort Mose, the Tuskegee
195 Airmen, and African-American veterans.

196 (3) (a) Each county commission, in partnership with the
197 designated local entity, must create a Florida Museum of History
198 Board for each museum in Orange, St. Johns, and Miami-Dade
199 Counties. Each county commission, in partnership with the
200 designated local entity, shall appoint no more than 11 members
201 to the board governing that museum. Each member must have
202 experience in at least one of the following areas:

203 1. Florida history or Black history.

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204 2. Museum curation.

205 3. Architecture.

206 4. Museum design.

207 5. Philanthropy.

208 (b) Each Florida Museum of History Board shall appoint an
209 operating board of directors consisting of scholarly experts and
210 other key stakeholders representing community organizations to
211 provide program support for each museum.

212 (4) Each Florida Museum of History Board, in consultation
213 with the respective county commission, shall:

214 (a) Develop a plan for the museum to acquire archival
215 materials and artifacts.

216 (b) Develop plans for permanent and temporary exhibitions
217 in consultation with colleagues from other institutions and
218 external content experts.

219 (c) Develop programs and educational materials, including
220 topics that support the mission of the Florida Museum of
221 History, in consultation with the Department of Education and
222 other external stakeholders.

223 (d) Provide educational materials that complement and
224 support required history instruction provided in public schools
225 in accordance with s. 1003.42(2) (h), Florida Statutes.

226 (e) Create a transition plan for the museum to become
227 financially self-sufficient.

228 (5) The Florida Museum of History Advisory Committee, in
229 partnership with the designated local entities, the Florida
230 Tourism Marketing Corporation, and the local visitor and
231 convention bureaus, shall develop and execute a marketing plan
232 to promote each Florida Museum of History. The designated local

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233 entities may collaborate with local destination marketing
234 organizations or convention and visitors bureaus.

235 Section 2. (1) The Legislature shall provide at least \$1
236 million each to the county commissions of Orange, St. Johns, and
237 Miami-Dade Counties to conduct a financial feasibility study for
238 each respective Florida Museum of History location. In each such
239 location, the financial feasibility study shall:

240 (a) Evaluate the visitation potential, infrastructure
241 readiness, and financial sustainability of the area.

242 (b) Evaluate each location's capacity to match at least 50
243 percent of funding provided by the Legislature using public,
244 philanthropic, or private sources.

245 (c) Assess the likelihood that the location will become
246 financially self-sufficient within 3 years after the museum's
247 opening, without additional financial support from the
248 Legislature.

249 (d) Be used to determine the appropriate size and the
250 square footage of the museums for each respective location based
251 on tourism markets, funding capacity, funding availability,
252 operational sustainability, and ensure adequate capacity for
253 robust programming and future expansion.

254 (2) (a) The construction of each Florida Museum of History
255 shall be funded by both local and state appropriations.

256 (b) The Legislature shall appropriate no more than \$75
257 million for the construction of the Florida Museums of History.
258 Each location may qualify for up to one-third of the funds
259 provided by the state.

260 (c) Each county commission, in partnership with its
261 designated local entity, shall match at least 50 percent of

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262 funding provided by the Legislature using public, philanthropic,
263 or private sources.

264 (d) Estimates for recurring operational costs shall be
265 developed during the building design, site development, and
266 construction process.

267 (e) In addition to receiving funds as set forth in
268 paragraph (a), the Florida Museum of History Board shall seek to
269 raise private funds, gifts, donations, and solicit grants, to
270 augment any recurring funding received. The museum shall earn
271 revenue from general admission fees, ticketed programming and
272 events, retail partnerships, and facility rentals. An endowment
273 shall be created to support the acquisition, research, and care
274 of collections obtained from across the network of museums that
275 exist in this state.

276 Section 3. (1) The Florida Museum of History is intended
277 to be a leading world-class cultural arts and history museum,
278 and must consist of:

279 (a) At least 10,000 square feet of exhibition space capable
280 of supporting all the functions of a leading world-class museum,
281 including collections care and storage, exhibits, programs,
282 large public events, large rental events, and a repository for
283 genealogical and archival materials with appropriate space for
284 public research.

285 (b) An archival and storage facility for items donated to
286 the Florida Museum of History at each location, as well as
287 historical documents and items and educational materials.

288 (2) Each Florida Museum of History Board must ensure that
289 at least 33 percent of the museum's exhibition space is
290 dedicated to the history of this state, including:

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291 (a) The history and impact of tourism, including
292 attractions, historical sites, and tourist destinations such as
293 Disney World, Silver Springs, Universal Studios, and this
294 state's beaches.

295 (b) The history and presence of the United States military,
296 including military bases and installations in the state.

297 (c) The history and impact of agriculture on the state's
298 economy.

299 (d) The history of space exploration and the impact of the
300 National Aeronautics and Space Administration and related
301 activities on this state.

302 (3) Each Florida Museum of History Board must consider
303 creating exhibition halls and spaces for:

304 (a) Florida's African American museums.

305 (b) Florida's Hispanic museums.

306 (c) Florida's Jewish Holocaust museums.

307 (d) African Americans in the military.

308 (e) African Americans and women in aviation.

309 (f) African Americans and women in space.

310 (g) The history of slavery and the Civil Rights Movement in
311 this state and the United States.

312 (h) An exhibition hall of life-sized statues or a statue
313 garden of significant individuals in the history of this state
314 and the United States.

315 (i) A library and archives of this state's Governors to
316 include 3D-printed life-sized statues of the Governors.

317 (j) A Presidential Hall of Statues.

318 (k) The history of the Civil War in this state.

319 (l) The history of reconstruction in this state.

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320 (m) The impact of Henry Morrison Flagler in this state.

321 (n) A portrait gallery featuring portraits of historical

322 and significant individuals who have impacted Florida.

323 (o) The history of Black towns, cities, and settlements in

324 this state.

325 (p) The history of the migration of the citizens of the

326 Caribbean to this state, including Cubans, Haitians, and

327 Jamaicans.

328 (q) A portrait gallery and archives of Black and Hispanic

329 elected officials in this state.

330 (r) The history of Historically Black Colleges and

331 Universities in this state, including the life of Mary McCleod

332 Bethune and Bethune Cookman University, and the United States.

333 (s) A gallery of Black art that includes paintings,

334 posters, prints, glass works, quilts, and figurines.

335 (t) The history of Orange County, St. Johns County, or

336 Miami-Dade County.

337 (u) The history of the Town of Eatonville and author Zora

338 Neale Hurston.

339 (v) Historically significant and influential persons,

340 including artists, musicians, poets, and athletes, and

341 historical events, including Black History events in this state

342 and the United States.

343 (w) The history of Black entrepreneurs, scientists,

344 inventors and inventions in this state and the United States.

345 (x) The history of the Tuskegee Airmen and the history of

346 the Tuskegee Airmen in this state.

347 (y) The history of baseball in this state, including the

348 major leagues, the Negro Baseball League, the minor leagues, and

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349

spring training.

350

(z) The impact of Cuban immigrants in this state.

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Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.