

By Senator Sharief

35-00005-26

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A bill to be entitled  
An act relating to the Historic Cemeteries Program;  
amending s. 267.21, F.S.; requiring local governments  
to approve applications from historic African-American  
cemeteries to change the land use category and zoning  
district of excess vacant land under certain  
conditions; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, the State of Florida recognizes the work done by  
the University of South Florida's Black Cemetery Network to  
reclaim black histories that have been underrepresented, to  
redress the exploitation and erasure of these African-American  
cemeteries due to urban redevelopment and land use practices,  
and to restore dignity to these cemeteries and honor the  
deceased, and

WHEREAS, the Black Cemetery Network has identified and  
registered 35 sites in Florida, and

WHEREAS, the Legislature passed House Bill 49 during the  
2023 Regular Session, and it was signed into law by the Governor  
on May 25, 2023, creating the Historic Cemeteries Program, and

WHEREAS, the Historic Cemeteries Program provides grants to  
eligible cemeteries for preservation efforts; however, some of  
these cemeteries have vacant land that could be sold to help  
fund the long-term maintenance and upkeep of such cemeteries,  
ensuring that the grants are used for the initial preservation  
efforts of these cemeteries, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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30       Section 1. Present subsection (3) of section 267.21,  
31 Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (4), and a new  
32 subsection (3) is added to that section, to read:

33       267.21 Historic Cemeteries Program.—

34       (3) If a historic African-American cemetery with excess  
35 vacant land sells or enters into a contract to sell such land  
36 for the express purpose of funding the cemetery's long-term  
37 maintenance and upkeep, the local government where such cemetery  
38 is located must approve an application to change the land use  
39 designation and zoning of such land to match the most permissive  
40 land use category and zoning district adjacent to the excess  
41 property.

42       Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.