

# FLORIDA POLITICS

## Carlos Smith, Alexandra Miller, Dana Young push new greyhound bill, banning steroids



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Decrying that racing dog owners are “doping greyhounds,” state Rep. **Carlos Guillermo Smith** joined state Rep. **Alexandra Miller** and **Dana Young** Friday in another effort to tighten regulation of dog racing in Florida, with a bill explicitly banning the use of steroids.

Smith, the Orlando Democrat, and Miller, the Sarasota Republican, introduced House Bill 743 Thursday, replacing an earlier version Miller had introduced. Young, the Tampa Republican introduced Senate Bill 512 last month. On Thursday, it was referred to the Senate Committees on Regulated Industries, Rules, and Appropriations.

The two bills were unveiled Friday as a bipartisan effort banning anabolic steroids on greyhound racing dogs.

The trio asserted that female racing greyhounds are routinely given injections of anabolic steroids, or testosterone, to prevent the loss of race days and push their bodies beyond

natural limits.

“We know they are using steroids,” Smith said. “They are doping greyhounds. It’s inhumane.”

A release issued by Smith’s office contended that the practice is outlawed in several countries but allowed in Florida. It cites the industry handbook Care of the Racing and Retired Greyhound as a warning of serious side effects including virilization and aggression, and that steroid use has been shown to have a negative effect on dogs’ heart function, and is linked to liver, kidney and cartilage damage, gastrointestinal problems and shock.

It’s not the first time for the effort. It and other greyhound reform bills have stalled in recent sessions as the Legislature has struggled with issues of “decoupling” greyhound racing from other forms of gambling allowed at tracks, notably card games.

Smith predicted this would be the year lawmakers seriously address decoupling, freeing track owners from having to offer dog racing if they want to offer more lucrative forms of gaming.

He said there are 19 racetracks in the United States and 12 are in Florida, and described wider abuses he’d like to see addressed, ultimately including the end of greyhound racing.

“Most track owners don’t want to race greyhounds anymore. The only reason they are doing it is because they are required to by law in order to run their card tables,” Smith said.

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### **Scott Powers**

Scott Powers is an Orlando-based political journalist with 30+ years’ experience, mostly at newspapers such as the Orlando Sentinel and the Columbus Dispatch. He covers local, state and federal politics and space news across much of Central Florida. His career earned numerous journalism awards for stories ranging from the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster to presidential elections to misplaced nuclear waste. He and his wife Connie have three grown children. Besides them, he’s into mystery and suspense books and movies, rock, blues, basketball, baseball, writing unpublished novels, and being amused. Email him at [scott@floridapolitics.com](mailto:scott@floridapolitics.com).