



Florida Politics

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.

Categories: None