



LEGISLATIVE REPORT

2025



**FLORIDA
RESTAURANT &
LODGING
ASSOCIATION**

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FRLA 2025 Legislative Report

Restaurant Reservation Anti-Piracy

PASSED

SB 940 by Senator McClain (R-Ocala)

HB 543 by Representative Oliver (R-Punta Gorda)

Third-party reservation platforms are using automated programs (bots) to misappropriate restaurant reservations available through restaurants and their online booking partners and then reselling the reservations at a high price.

This practice harms both consumers and restaurants:

- Customers may struggle to find available reservations at popular restaurants or be forced to pay for something that should be free.
- When third-party reservation platforms fail to sell a reservation, they do not cancel it, leaving the restaurant with an empty table. As a result, the restaurant loses revenue, restaurant servers miss out on expected income from tips, and potential customers miss the opportunity to dine at that restaurant.

This legislation prohibits the sale of restaurant reservations without the restaurant's consent.

FRLA supported this legislation. The Governor has approved this bill.

Transient Occupancy/Operations Charges

PASSED

SB 606 by Senator Leek (R-Ormond Beach)

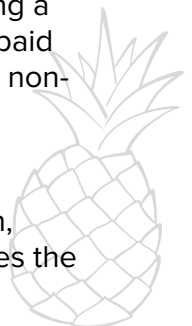
HB 535 by Representative Johnson (R-Chiefland)

Public lodging establishment operators are currently permitted by statute to promptly remove non-paying guests upon giving the guest proper notice. Because the present statute isn't clear, some public lodging establishments are forced to go through the landlord/tenant process to remove guests who have not paid their bills. This can be a lengthy process, and it puts a significant financial burden on the public lodging establishment.

This legislation clarifies the definitions of transient and non-transient occupancy and helps public lodging establishment operators and their guests better understand the difference between being a guest and being a tenant. This bill clarifies the circumstances under which guests who have not paid may be removed from a public lodging establishment. It also removes the mandatory arrest for a non-paying guest that is removed from a public lodging establishment.

This legislation was amended in its first House committee hearing to include a prohibition on automatic gratuities and other service charges. FRLA worked tirelessly to remove this prohibition, advocating instead for increased consumer transparency. This legislation also creates and defines the term "operations charge," which includes all mandatory charges that a customer may receive in addition to food, beverage, and taxes.

FRLA supported this legislation. The Governor has approved this bill.



FRLA 2025 Legislative Report

Taxes

HB 7031 by House Ways and Means Committee

The 2025 tax package brings a major win for our industry by permanently eliminating the **Business Rent Tax**. This means that businesses leasing commercial property will no longer be required to pay sales tax on those leases — a significant cost savings for many of our members.

The tax package also includes two relatively small changes to how **Tourist Development Taxes (TDT)** can be used. First, the provision that allows TDT to be used for public facilities that help increase tourist-related business activity has been expanded to include coastal fiscally constrained counties, which were previously excluded from accessing funds for this purpose. Second, TDT revenue can now be used to employ, train, equip, insure, or otherwise fund certified lifeguards for beaches along the Gulf or Atlantic coasts. Importantly, there is no cap on how much TDT revenue can be allocated for lifeguard-related expenses.

While FRLA continues to oppose any expansion of the approved uses of TDT funds, we view these changes as relatively minor in comparison to more aggressive proposals that were considered during the session. We do acknowledge the potential for overly broad use of the new lifeguard provision, and it will be important for local Tourist Development Councils to monitor and manage this carefully.

Budget

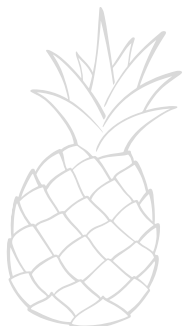
SB 2500 by Senate Appropriations

FRLA successfully secured \$1 million for its in-state tourism marketing program. These funds come from a dedicated trust fund, not general revenue, and will support the promotion of local events and festivals throughout Florida — ultimately driving increased tourism and activity at our restaurants and hotels.

VISIT FLORIDA Funding

The House and Senate have funded VISIT FLORIDA in the amount of \$80 million.

FRLA supported funding for VISIT FLORIDA.



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Tort Reform Rollback

DIED

SB 832 by Senator Burgess (R-Zephyrhills)
HB 947 by Representative Blanco (R-Miami)

HB 947 relates to evidence of medical damages in personal injury suits. This bill rolls back some of the provisions that were instituted in 2023, diminishing the positive impact of the 2023 tort reform package. The provisions of HB 947 bill were later amended onto SB 832, along with other provisions that would also be less than positive for Florida's civil litigation climate.

FRLA opposed this legislation.

Employment Verification

DIED

HB 955 by Representative Jacques (R-Seminole)

This legislation would require all Florida employers to use E-verify for employment verification, removing the 25-person exemption for small businesses. While there were many bills filed in the House and Senate that contained similar provisions to HB 955, as well as additional provisions relating to immigration and employment eligibility, there was no specific Senate companion to this bill. HB 955 passed the House, but was never considered by the Senate.

FRLA opposed this legislation.

Equine Sport Facility Beverage License (Local Bill)

PASSED

HB 4067 by Representative Chamberlin (R-Belleview)

Marion County is an important hub for equestrian activity and eventing, both domestic and international. The equine industry has a significant positive impact on the state and local economy. The legislature passed a narrowly crafted local bill that will expand the service offerings of equine sport facilities in Marion County, which will help this industry continue to grow and thrive in Marion County.

FRLA supported this legislation. The Governor approved this bill.



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Hemp Products

DIED

SB 438 by Senator Burton (R-Lakeland)

HB 7027 by House Housing, Agriculture, and Tourism Subcommittee

Both the Senate and the House considered proposals to regulate hemp-infused beverages and other products. Proposals from the House and Senate addressed potency, packaging, and where products were permitted to be sold. The House proposal allowed for sales of hemp infused beverages by liquor stores for off-premises consumption. The Senate proposal specified that hemp-infused beverages could be sold by certain licensed alcohol vendors, which would have likely included restaurants with a quota liquor license. The Senate passed SB 438 on food and hemp products, but the House did not elect to take the Senate bill. It is anticipated that this issue will be addressed in a future session.

FRLA did not take a position on this legislation.

