



Bill Snapshot

HB 9: VISIT Florida Reform

HB 9 fundamentally transforms VISIT Florida to require transparency and accountability.

- **VISIT Florida is in desperate need of reform.**
 - VISIT Florida was intended to be a public-private partnership, but taxpayers pay 86% of VISIT Florida's budget.¹
 - VISIT Florida lacks transparency and accountability and has used poor judgement in spending public funds:
 - VISIT Florida paid the rapper Pitbull a million dollars to promote the state as a tourist destination. VISIT Florida refused to release the details of its contract with Pitbull. Pitbull later released the contract after Speaker Corcoran filed a lawsuit. In wake of the Pitbull debacle, VISIT Florida paid the outgoing President/CEO a \$73,000 bonus.²
 - VISIT Florida paid \$12 million for the production of a cooking show, and the contractor retained ownership and copyright of the original television material.³
 - VISIT Florida paid almost \$18 million over four years to Brand USA, an entity led by Christopher L. Thompson, for international advertising. Mr. Thompson once ran VISIT Florida and previously hired the VISIT Florida executive who later awarded the funds to Mr. Thompson and Brand USA.⁴

LAST SEEN:

Passed House on 3/10/2017
and sent to Senate in
Messages on 3/22/2017

Sponsor:
Rep. Renner

CURRENT STATUS:

In Senate Commerce and
Tourism Committee

HEADED TO:

The bill would go to Senate
Appropriations if it passes
out of Senate Commerce and
Tourism

¹ <http://watchdog.org/285247/enterprise-florida-accountability/>

² <http://www.naplesnews.com/story/news/local/florida/2017/01/10/visit-florida-pay-73000-ceo-after-controversial-pitbull-deal/96389376/>

³ Records submitted by VISIT Florida, at the request of Speaker Corcoran.

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HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

- **The bill provides additional accountability for VISIT Florida by:**
 - Increasing transparency of VISIT Florida contracts and partnership agreements.
 - Requiring VISIT Florida contracts to contain performance standards, operating budgets, and salaries of employees of the contracting entity.
 - Prohibiting VISIT Florida employees or board members from receiving food, beverages, lodging, entertainment or gifts paid for by VISIT Florida funds or funds from a local tourist or economic development agency.
 - Requiring VISIT Florida to post all contracts on the CFO Transparency website.
 - Requiring the Governor to approve all out-of-state and international travel.
 - Requiring VISIT Florida to comply with state procurement laws.
 - Limiting travel and per diem expenses of VISIT Florida employees to those of state employees.
 - Limiting compensation of VISIT Florida employees to \$130,000, freezing benefits of employees at current levels and prohibiting bonuses for employees unless authorized by law.
 - Limiting the type of contributions that may be included when calculating the one-to-one match to direct cash contributions from private sources and fees for service.
 - Making it clear that government entities or entities receiving more than 50% of its revenue in the previous year from public sources are not private contributions.
 - Requiring VISIT Florida to return all unmatched contributions to the state treasury by June 30 of each fiscal year.
 - Requiring the Office of Economic and Demographic Research to be an original recipient of the disaggregated source data that is used to develop estimates and measures.
 - Removing the public records exemption for marketing projects and research.
- **The bill provides additional legislative oversight of VISIT Florida by:**
 - Requiring VISIT Florida to place proposed contracts worth \$750,000 or more on 14-day legislative consultation. Upon objection by the chair or vice chair of the Legislative Budget Commission or Speaker or Senate President, VISIT Florida would be prohibited from entering into contract.
 - Requiring VISIT Florida to submit detailed operating budget to LBC each year in order to obtain release of funds.
 - Requiring Senate confirmation of the VISIT Florida President/CEO.