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Florida sees surge of lawsuits filed

700% increase comes before new restrictions take effect

John Kennedy

Capital Bureau | USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

TALLAHASSEE – Tens of thousands of lawsuits – an almost 700% increase – flooded the offices of court clerks across Florida days before Gov. Ron DeSantis signed sweeping new business-backed legal restrictions which help shield in-

urance companies, property owners and others accused of wrongdoing.

The law went into effect with DeSantis' signature on Friday. But the lawsuit logjam will take months for clerks and later judges to sort out, officials say.

Critics said that there's no shortage of irony in that the push by the state's biggest business associations to limit

lawsuits first spawned a tidal wave of litigation.

The crush was prompted by attorneys seeking to have cases heard under less-restrictive laws that were in place before Friday. The host of legal changes would apply only to lawsuits filed after that day,

"There are many cases that would've

been turned down or would've been settled pre-suit. But given the deadline, you have to file a suit to protect your client," said Todd Michaels, a Coral Gables lawyer and secretary of the Florida Justice Association.

Who's to blame?

"They brought this upon

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Army of lobbyists helped dilute US banking rules for 2018 vote



President Joe Biden has asked Congress for the authority to impose tougher penalties on failed banks, including Silicon Valley Bank. The Justice Department and the Securities and Exchange Commission have started investigations.

STEVEN SENNE/AP FILE

As a result, several lawmakers received campaign boosts

Brian Slodysko and Ken Sweet

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON – It seemed like a good idea at the time: Red-state Democrats facing grim reelection prospects would join forces with Republicans to slash bank regulations – demonstrating a willingness to work with then-President Donald Trump while bucking many in their party.

That unlikely coalition voted in 2018 to roll back portions of a far-reaching 2010 law intended to prevent a future financial crisis. But those changes are now being blamed for contributing to the recent collapse of Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank that prompted a federal rescue and has stoked anxiety about a broader banking contagion.

The rollback was leveraged with a lobbying campaign that cost tens of millions of dollars that drew an army of hundreds of lobbyists and it was seeded with ample campaign contributions.

The episode offers a fresh reminder of the power that bankers wield in Washington, where the industry spends prodigiously to fight regulation and often hires former members of Congress and their staff to make the case that they are not a source of risk to the economy

"The bottom line is that these banks would have faced a tougher supervisory framework under the original ... law, but Congress and the Trump regulators took an ax to it," said Carter Dougherty, a spokesman for Americans for Financial Re-



Republicans had long looked to blunt the impact of the 2010 Dodd-Frank law. But rather than push for sweeping deregulation, Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, who led the Senate banking committee, hoped a narrowed focus could draw enough support from moderate Democrats to clear the Senate's 60-vote filibuster threshold.

HANNAH GABER/USA TODAY FILE

form, a left-leaning financial sector watchdog group. "We can draw a direct line between the deregulation of the Trump period, driven by the bank lobby, and the chaos of the last few weeks."

President Joe Biden has asked Congress for the authority to

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Fla. House votes to drop 'permission slip' for guns

'This is insanity': Democrat decries permitless carry

James Call

Tallahassee Democrat
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

Gun rights advocates passed a major milestone Friday in their drive to get a permitless carry bill to Gov. Ron DeSantis for his signature.

The Florida House approved HB 543 on a mostly party line 76–32 vote, with one Republican, Rep. Vicki Lopez of Miami voting with 31 Democrats in opposition.

The measure, and its Senate companion, SB 150, does away with background checks, training, and fees for a concealed-carry weapons license. The Department of Agriculture has issued more than 2.66 million CWLs.

"This bill simply allows Floridians to conceal carry without red tape and expense. Florida will not come between you and your freedom to protect yourself anymore," said Rep. Chuck Brannon, R-Macclenny, who has sponsored the measure the past two sessions.

Brannon and his allies criticized the licensing process as having to pay for a "government permission slip" to exercise a constitutional right to protect oneself and one's family.

"A constitutional God-given right endowed by our creator," explained Rep. Adam Botana, R-Naples, with a reference to the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Democrats argued supporters twist the Second Amendment into a "dangerous concept."

Rep. Michelle K. Rayner-Goolsby, D-Tampa, added that whenever lawmakers discuss gun laws "everyone becomes a YouTube lawyer."

"The right of the people to keep and bear arms (shall) not be infringed does not mean that you're not registering it. Does not mean there are no rules and guardrails ... This is insanity," said Rayner-Goolsby.

Earlier, Rep. Dan Daley, D-Sunrise, told the Tallahassee Democrat the bill's supporters talk a lot about the constitution, "but they must have read only the CliffsNotes version."

Daley, a corporate lawyer and CWL holder, noted in debate on the House floor that more than 7,600 CWL applicants were denied by the state in 2021.

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