

# [***Florida Lawmakers Pass More Bills Targeting Disney Amid Legal Fight***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:685F-4B91-DXVP-529K-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 856 words

**Byline:** Alison Durkee, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** A bill targeting Walt Disney World s monorail will now go to Gov. Ron DeSantis to sign.

**Body**

**Topline**

The Florida House passed two bills Wednesday that target Walt Disney World s monorail and a development agreement the resort enacted with the former board of its special district, further escalating state Republicans year-longbattle with Disneyeven after the company has alleged in court the GOP s attacks violate Disney s First Amendment rights.

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A monorail zips passes through Epcot at Walt Disney World in Orange County, Florida, on May 30, 2022.

Anadolu Agency via Getty Images

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**Key Facts**

The GOP-controlled House passed two pieces of legislation, HB 1305 and SB 1604.

HB 1305, a broader transportation bill, targets Disney through anamendmentthat says the state shall create safety rules and perform safety inspections for privately owned and or operated fixed-guideway transportation systems located in special districts that have boundaries in two counties.

The amendment was designed to target the monorail system in Walt Disney World, which like Disney s theme park rides the company has previously been able to control inspections for itself, and Republicans pointed to issues with the monorail like a fatal crash in 2009 to justify the move.

The bill passed in a 83-32 vote over the concerns of Democrats whoarguedit was politically motivated against Disney and will now go to Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) to sign, after the Senate passed the bill on Tuesday.

SB 1604, which passed the House 75-34, would nullify a development agreement Disney enacted that gave the company broad power over developing land on its property, which was made with the former board of the special district that oversees Disney s property before that board was replaced with DeSantis appointees.

The bill which the Senate has alreadypassed, but must now approve changes to would prohibit such agreements if they re enacted within three months of laws that modify how special district board members are elected, and give boards four months to review agreements after taking office and decide whether to adopt them.

**Crucial Quote**

When are we going to stop playing whack-a-mouse because our Governor is big mad that he got outsmarted by Disney? Democratic state Rep. Anna Eskamani, who represents Orlando where Walt Disney World is located, said during debate on SB 1604, as quoted byFlorida ***Politics***.

**Chief Critic**

Disney has not yet responded to a request for comment on the legislation passed Wednesday, but the company has defended its development agreement as lawfully enacted and sued DeSantis and his special district appointees in federal court, taking aim at the state s relentless campaign to weaponize government power against Disney in retaliation for expressing a political viewpoint unpopular with certain State officials.

**What To Watch For**

DeSantis and Florida Republicans have alsosuggestedthat in addition to the monorail, the state will also take control of inspections for Disney s rides. The company along with other major theme parks like Universal Studios Orlando and SeaWorld is right now allowed to inspect its own rides under a carveout in state law that allows that for theme parks with more than 1,000 employees and in-house inspectors. Any new regulations for Disney s rides are expected to only apply to Walt Disney World and not to other large theme parks in the state.

**Key Background**

DeSantis and Florida Republicans have beenfeuding with Disneysince March 2022, when the company openlyopposedthe state s Parental Rights in Education law, known by critics as Don t Say Gay. The state initially took aim at Disney bygetting rid ofits special district then known as Reedy Creek Improvement District altogether, before backtracking and enactinglegislationthat just renamed the district to the Central Florida Tourism Oversight District and replaced the board with DeSantisappointees. Reedy Creek had been overseeing Walt Disney World since the 1960s, functioning in a similar fashion to county governments and overseeing infrastructure like road improvements, utilities, waste management, building permits and emergency services. The special district is separate from Disney, but the company was able to exert a significant level of influence as its major landowner, including electing its former board. The discovery of the development agreement by DeSantis new board revived Republicans attacks on Disney, leading to the new legislation passed Wednesday and moreaggressive movesby the board to exert control over Disney s land. After Disneysued the state filed minutes after the board voted to void the development agreement the boardcountersuedDisney in state court Monday in a further effort to throw out the agreement.

**Further Reading**

DeSantis Board Countersues Disney: Here s A Time Line Of Florida s War With The Mouse Over Special District(Forbes)

Florida Republicans Double Down On Disney Attack After Company Sues DeSantis(Forbes)

Disney Sues DeSantis After Board Votes To Get Rid Of Special Agreement(Forbes)

DeSantis Ramps Up Disney Feud With New Measures Against Theme Park(Forbes)

DeSantis Disney Board Meeting: Here s How Governor And His Appointees Could Change Disney World(Forbes)

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