

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Judiciary Committee

**BILL:** CS/SB's 886 & 2268

**INTRODUCER:** Judiciary Committee and Senators Oelrich and Baker

**SUBJECT:** Parental Authority/Motor Vehicle Racing Events/Liability Releases

**DATE:** April 16, 2009                      **REVISED:** \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Daniell	Maclure	JU	<b>Fav/CS</b>
2.			CF	
3.			RU	
4.				
5.				
6.				

**Please see Section VIII. for Additional Information:**

A. COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE.....  Statement of Substantial Changes

B. AMENDMENTS.....  Technical amendments were recommended

Amendments were recommended

Significant amendments were recommended

**I. Summary:**

This bill provides that a motorsport liability release signed by a natural guardian on behalf of a minor is valid. The bill also expands the definition of “nonspectators” to include a minor, if the minor’s natural guardian signed the motorsport liability release.

Additionally, the bill provides statutory authority for natural guardians, on behalf of their minor children, to execute pre-injury releases or waivers, waiving any claims against an activity provider and its employees for the inherent risks involved in any activity. A waiver and release signed by a natural guardian on behalf of his or her minor child does not grant civil immunity to any person or entity whose negligence, gross negligence, or intentional conduct causes injury to a minor child. The bill defines negligence and also authorizes natural guardians to sign waivers and releases on behalf of their minor children in accordance with the equine and motor sport statutes.

This bill substantially amends sections 549.09 and 744.301, Florida Statutes.

## II. Present Situation:

### Parental Autonomy

Parental autonomy is a liberty interest protected by the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. The Fourteenth Amendment provides, in part, that no state shall “deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.”<sup>1</sup> The United States Supreme Court has recognized that this clause guarantees “more than fair process” and, instead, also “provides heightened protection against government interference with certain fundamental rights and liberty interests.”<sup>2</sup> Specifically, the Court has said that the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment protects “a right of personal privacy,” which includes the right to independently make certain important decisions without governmental interference.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the Court has found it “clear that among the decisions that an individual may make without unjustified government interference are personal decisions ‘relating to marriage, procreation, contraception, family relationships, and child rearing and education.’”<sup>4</sup>

Parental autonomy, or parents’ interest in the care, custody, and control of their children, is one of the oldest recognized liberty interests. The United States Supreme Court has addressed the issue of parental autonomy in a number of cases over the years.<sup>5</sup> In 1923, the Court held that child-rearing was a fundamental right, stating: “That the state may do much, go very far, indeed, in order to improve the quality of its citizens, physically, mentally and morally, is clear; but the individual has certain fundamental rights which must be respected.”<sup>6</sup> Several years later the Court again addressed the issue and confirmed “that the custody, care and nurture of the child reside first in the parents, whose primary function and freedom include preparation for obligations the state can neither supply nor hinder.”<sup>7</sup>

In 2000, the Court addressed the issue of parental autonomy in the context of grandparent visitation. In *Troxel v. Granville*, 530 U.S. 57 (2000), paternal grandparents petitioned to expand their visitation rights with their deceased son’s children after the children’s biological mother (who had remarried) reduced the visitation from every weekend to once a month. The Court expounded upon the right of parents to make decisions in raising their children:

[T]here is a presumption that fit parents act in the best interests of their children. . . . Accordingly, so long as a parent adequately cares for his or her children (*i.e.*, is fit), there will normally be no reason for the State to inject itself into the private realm of the family to further question the ability of that parent to make the best decisions concerning the rearing of that parent’s children.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. CONST. amend. XIV, s. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Washington v. Glucksberg*, 521 U.S. 702, 719-20 (1997).

<sup>3</sup> *Carey v. Population Servs., Int’l*, 431 U.S. 678, 684 (1977) (quoting *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 113, 152 (1973)).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at 684-85 (quoting *Roe*, 410 U.S. at 152-53) (internal citations omitted).

<sup>5</sup> See *Meyer v. Nebraska*, 262 U.S. 390 (1923); *Pierce v. Society of Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary*, 268 U.S. 510 (1925); *Prince v. Massachusetts*, 321 U.S. 158 (1944); *Stanley v. Illinois*, 405 U.S. 645 (1972); *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 406 U.S. 205 (1972); *Quilloin v. Walcott*, 434 U.S. 246 (1978); *Parham v. J.R.*, 442 U.S. 584 (1979); *Santosky v. Kramer*, 455 U.S. 745 (1982); *Washington v. Glucksberg*, 521 U.S. 702 (1997); *Troxel v. Granville*, 530 U.S. 57 (2000).

<sup>6</sup> *Meyer v. Nebraska*, 262 U.S. 390, 401 (1923).

<sup>7</sup> *Prince v. Massachusetts*, 321 U.S. 158, 166 (1944).

. . . .

[T]he Due Process Clause does not permit a State to infringe on the fundamental right of parents to make child rearing decisions simply because a state judge believes a “better” decision could be made.<sup>8</sup>

While an implicit right of privacy is recognized under the United States Constitution, Floridians enjoy an explicit right of privacy under article I, section 23 of the Florida Constitution. Specifically, Florida’s right to privacy provision states: “Every natural person has the right to be let alone and free from governmental intrusion into the person’s private life except as otherwise provided herein.”<sup>9</sup>

The Florida Supreme Court has held that the Florida Constitution provides more privacy protection than the federal constitution. Specifically:

“The citizens of Florida opted for more protection from governmental intrusion when they approved article I, section 23, of the Florida Constitution. This amendment is an independent, freestanding constitutional provision which declares the fundamental right to privacy. Article I, section 23, was intentionally phrased in strong terms. . . . Since the people of this state exercised their prerogative and enacted an amendment to the Florida Constitution which expressly and succinctly provides for a strong right of privacy not found in the United States Constitution, it can only be concluded that the right is much broader in scope than that of the Federal Constitution.”<sup>10</sup>

Further, the Florida Supreme Court held that “[b]ased upon the privacy provision in the Florida Constitution, . . . the State may not intrude upon the parents’ fundamental right to raise their children except in cases where the child is threatened with harm.”<sup>11</sup>

### **Pre-Injury Liability Releases**

“Exculpatory clauses extinguish or limit liability of a potentially culpable party through the use of disclaimer, assumption of risk, and indemnification clauses as well as releases of liability.”<sup>12</sup> The most common exculpatory clauses, or “releases” as they are commonly called, are the waiver of liability<sup>13</sup> and assumption of risk clauses.<sup>14</sup> Exculpatory clauses are generally disfavored; however, because of the countervailing policy that favors the freedom to contract,

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<sup>8</sup> *Troxel*, 530 U.S. at 68-69, 72-73.

<sup>9</sup> FLA. CONST. art. I, s. 23.

<sup>10</sup> *Beagle v. Beagle*, 678 So. 2d 1271, 1275-76 (Fla. 1996) (quoting *Winfield v. Division of Pari-Mutuel Wagering*, 477 So. 2d 544, 548 (Fla. 1985)).

<sup>11</sup> *Beagle*, 678 So. 2d at 1276.

<sup>12</sup> Steven B. Lesser, *How to Draft Exculpatory Clauses that Limit or Extinguish Liability*, 75 FLA. B.J. 10, 10 (Nov. 2001).

<sup>13</sup> A waiver of liability is a “written instrument in which the participant agrees not to hold the provider liable for any injuries or damages resulting from the provider’s negligence.” Mario R. Arango and William R. Trueba, Jr., *The Sports Chamber: Exculpatory Agreements Under Pressure*, 14 U. MIAMI ENT. & SPORTS L. REV. 1, 7-8 (1997).

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

exculpatory clauses are enforceable in Florida as long as the language is clear and unequivocal.<sup>15</sup> “The wording of such an agreement must be so clear and understandable that an ordinary and knowledgeable party to it will know what he is contracting away.”<sup>16</sup> Florida case law has also found that an exculpatory clause can properly waive liability for gross negligence;<sup>17</sup> however, clauses that extinguish liability for intentional torts or reckless harm will generally not be upheld.<sup>18</sup>

In the context of a pre-injury waiver or release executed by a parent on behalf of a minor, “[t]he enforceability . . . concerns two compelling interests: that of the parents in raising their children and that of the state to protect children.”<sup>19</sup> Consistent with a parent’s right to raise his or her child without governmental interference, Florida courts have upheld pre-injury releases executed by a parent on behalf of the child for the purposes of obtaining medical care or insurance, or to participate in community-sponsored events.<sup>20</sup> Florida’s district courts have addressed whether pre-injury releases executed by parents are enforceable and have reached inconsistent conclusions.<sup>21</sup> In 2008, the issue was presented to the Florida Supreme Court in *Kirton v. Fields*, 997 So. 2d 349 (Fla. 2008).

In *Kirton*, the personal representative of a 14-year-old boy, who was killed while riding an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) at a motor sports park, brought a wrongful death action against the owners of the motor sports park. The trial court entered summary judgment in favor of the defendants, finding that the waiver and release executed by the boy’s father, which allowed the boy access to the motor sports park, barred the lawsuit. The release provided, in part, that the undersigned:

HEREBY RELEASES, WAIVES, DISCHARGES AND COVENANTS NOT TO SUE the . . . track owners, . . . owners and lessees of premises used to conduct the EVENT(S), . . . all for the purposes herein referred to as “Releasees,” FROM ALL LIABILITY TO THE UNDERSIGNED, his personal representatives, assigns, heirs, and next of kin FOR ANY AND ALL LOSS OR DAMAGE, AND ANY CLAIM OR DEMANDS THEREFOR ON ACCOUNT OF INJURY TO THE PERSON OR PROPERTY OR RESULTING IN DEATH OF THE UNDERSIGNED ARISING OUT OF OR RELATED TO THE EVENT(S).

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<sup>15</sup> See *Middleton v. Lomaskin*, 266 So. 2d 678, 680 (Fla. 3d DCA 1972); *Tout v. Hartford Acc. & Indem. Co.*, 390 So. 2d 155, 156 (Fla. 3d DCA 1980); *Theis v. J & J Racing Promotions*, 571 So. 2d 92, 94 (Fla. 2d DCA 1990); *Banfield v. Louis*, 589 So. 2d 441, 444 (Fla. 4th DCA 1991); *Cain v. Banka*, 932 So. 2d 575, 578 (Fla. 5th DCA 2006); *Krathen v. School Bd. of Monroe County*, 972 So. 2d 887, 888 (Fla. 3d DCA 2007); *Applegate v. Cable Water Ski, L.C.*, 974 So. 2d 1112, 1114 (Fla. 5th DCA 2008).

<sup>16</sup> Steven B. Lesser, *supra* note 12, at 12 (quoting *Fuentes v. Owen*, 310 So. 2d 458, 459-60 (Fla. 3d DCA 1975)).

<sup>17</sup> See *Theis*, 571 So. 2d at 94.

<sup>18</sup> Steven B. Lesser, *supra* note 12, at 10.

<sup>19</sup> *Kirton v. Fields*, 997 So. 2d 349, 352 (Fla. 2008).

<sup>20</sup> *Fields v. Kirton*, 961 So. 2d 1127, 1129 (Fla. 4th DCA 2007).

<sup>21</sup> See *Lantz v. Iron Horse Saloon, Inc.*, 717 So. 2d 590 (Fla. 5th DCA 1998), *rev'd*, 997 So. 2d 349 (Fla. 2008) (release executed by parent was sufficient to release claims based on premises owner’s negligence); *Gonzalez v. City of Coral Gables*, 871 So. 2d 1067 (Fla. 3d DCA 2004) (pre-injury release allowing child to participate in a community or school sponsored activity was enforceable); *Krathen v. School Bd. of Monroe County*, 972 So. 2d 887 (Fla. 3d DCA 2007) (pre-injury release for child’s participation on the high school cheerleading squad was applicable to negligence claims and enforceable); *Fields v. Kirton*, 961 So. 2d 1127 (Fla. 4th DCA 2007) (pre-injury releases executed by a parent on behalf of a minor not supported by Florida law); *Applegate v. Cable Water Ski, L.C.*, 974 So. 2d 1112 (Fla. 5th DCA 2008) (pre-injury exculpatory clause related to a commercial activity was unenforceable as against public policy).

WHETHER CUASED (sic) BY THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE RELEASEES OR OTHERWISE.

....

HEREBY ASSUMES FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY RISK OR BODILY INJURY, DEATH OR PROPERTY DAMAGE arising out of or related to the EVENT(S) whether caused by the NEGLIGENCE OF RELEASEES or otherwise.

....

HEREBY acknowledges that THE ACTIVITIES OF THE EVENT(S) ARE VERY DANGEROUS and involve the risk of serious injury and/or death and/or property damage. Each of the UNDERSIGNED, also expressly acknowledges that INJURIES RECEIVED MAY BE COMPOUNDED OR INCREASED BY NEGLIGENT RESCUE OPERATIONS OR PROCEDURES OF THE RELEASEES.

HEREBY agrees that this Release and Waiver of Liability . . . extends to all acts of negligence by the Releasees, INCLUDING NEGLIGENCE RESCUE OPERATIONS and is intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by the laws of the Province or State in which the Event(s) is/are conducted . . . .<sup>22</sup>

The Fourth District Court of Appeal (4th DCA) subsequently reversed the trial court's holding, instead finding that the release was unenforceable because a child's property rights cannot be waived in advance absent a basis in common law or statute, neither of which exists.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, the 4th DCA said that while the Legislature has provided a statutory scheme authorizing guardians to settle minors' claims under limited circumstances,<sup>24</sup> it did not authorize parents to execute pre-injury releases. "If the legislature wished to grant a parent the authority to bind a minor's estate by signing a pre-injury release, they could have said so."<sup>25</sup> Recognizing conflict with another case, the 4th DCA certified the following question to the Florida Supreme Court: Whether a parent may bind a minor's estate by the pre-injury execution of a release.<sup>26</sup>

In *Kirton v. Fields*, the Florida Supreme Court recognized that parents have a fundamental liberty interest in decisions involving their minor children, but that parental rights are not absolute. Under the doctrine of "parens patriae"<sup>27</sup> the state may, in certain situations, usurp parental authority to protect children.<sup>28</sup> In noting this, the Court stated:

<sup>22</sup> Brief of Respondent on the Merits at 6 n. 2, *Kirton v. Fields*, No. SC07-1739 (Fla. March 6, 2008) (on file with the Senate Committee on Judiciary).

<sup>23</sup> *Fields*, 961 So. 2d at 1130.

<sup>24</sup> See s. 744.301(2), F.S.

<sup>25</sup> *Fields*, 961 So. 2d at 1130.

<sup>26</sup> *Id.*

<sup>27</sup> Parens patriae, which is Latin for "parent of his or her country," describes "the state in its capacity as provider of protection to those unable to care for themselves." BLACK'S LAW DICTIONARY (8th ed. 2004).

<sup>28</sup> *Kirton*, 997 So. 2d at 353.

While a parent's decision to allow a minor child to participate in a particular activity is part of the parent's fundamental right to raise a child, this does not equate with a conclusion that a parent has a fundamental right to execute a pre-injury release of a tortfeasor on behalf of a minor child. . . . [W]hen a parent decides to execute a pre-injury release on behalf of a minor child, the parent is not protecting the welfare of the child, but is instead protecting the interests of the activity provider. . . . For this reason, the state must assert its role under *parens patriae* to protect the interests of the minor children.<sup>29</sup>

After a review of Florida case law, as well as out-of-state precedent, the Court determined that public policy concerns preclude the enforcement of pre-injury releases executed by parents on behalf of their minor children in order to participate in commercial activities. The Court limited its holding to commercial activities, in part, because businesses owe a duty of care to their patrons and by permitting pre-injury releases "the incentive to take reasonable precautions to protect the safety of minor children would be removed."<sup>30</sup> Additionally, a commercial business owner can inspect the premises, train his or her employees, regulate the types of activities permitted, and has the ability to purchase insurance to provide protection in the event a child is injured.<sup>31</sup> In contrast, community- and school-sponsored activities often have limited resources and "the providers cannot afford to carry liability insurance" and if "pre-injury releases were invalidated, . . . volunteers would be faced with the threat of lawsuits and the potential for substantial damage awards, which could lead volunteers to decide that the risk is not worth the effort."<sup>32</sup>

In his dissent, Justice Wells argued that the distinction the majority made between commercial and community-sponsored activities was already argued and quashed by the Florida Supreme Court in a previous case.<sup>33</sup> Justice Wells argued that the dividing line between commercial and community activities is not clear and that there is no reasonable "basis in law or fact for this distinction, nor a reliable standard by which to apply it without making value judgments as to the underlying activity that the parent has deemed appropriate for the child to engage in."<sup>34</sup> Because of the many questions involved in this issue, Justice Wells argued that the decision on whether pre-injury releases executed by a parent on behalf of a minor child should be enforceable is a decision that is best left to the Legislature. "If pre-injury releases are to be banned or regulated, it should be done by the Legislature so that a statute can set universally applicable standards and definitions."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *Id.* at 357-58.

<sup>30</sup> *Id.* at 358.

<sup>31</sup> *Id.* (citing *Hojnowski v. Vans Skate Park*, 901 A.2d 381, 388 (2006)).

<sup>32</sup> *Id.* at 357.

<sup>33</sup> See *Global Travel Marketing, Inc. v. Shea*, 908 So. 2d 392 (Fla. 2005) (holding that an arbitration agreement executed by a parent on behalf of the child in a commercial travel contract was enforceable).

<sup>34</sup> *Kirton*, 997 So. 2d at 363 (Wells, J., dissenting) (quoting *Shea*, 908 So. 2d at 404).

<sup>35</sup> *Id.*

## Motorsport Nonspectator Liability Releases

Section 549.09, F.S., authorizes the operator of a closed-course motorsport facility<sup>36</sup> to require nonspectators to sign a liability release form as a condition of entry. The statute defines a nonspectator as “event participants who have signed a motorsport liability release.” The liability release form must be printed in at least eight-point type and provides that the “persons or entities owning, leasing, or operating the facility or sponsoring or sanctioning the motorsport event shall not be liable to a nonspectator or his or her heirs, representative, or assigns for negligence which proximately causes injury or property damage to the nonspectator.”<sup>37</sup> The release may be signed by more than one person as long as the release form appears on each page that is signed.<sup>38</sup>

## Florida Guardianship Law

Chapter 744, F.S., generally called the Florida Guardianship Law, governs types of guardianship, appointment of guardians, guardians’ powers and duties, termination of a guardianship, as well as veterans’ and public guardianships. A guardian is “a person who has been appointed by the court to act on behalf of a ward’s person or property, or both.”<sup>39</sup> There are several different types of guardianship recognized under Florida law.<sup>40</sup> One of the most common types of guardianship is that of natural guardians. “The mother and father jointly are natural guardians of their own children and of their adopted children, during minority.”<sup>41</sup> Section 744.301(2), F.S., provides that natural guardians are authorized, on behalf of their minor children, to:

- Settle any claim or cause of action accruing to any of their minor children;
- Collect, receive, manage, and dispose of the proceeds of any such settlement;
- Collect, receive, manage, and dispose of any real or personal property distributed from an estate or trust;
- Collect, receive, manage, and dispose of the proceeds from a life insurance policy payable to, or accruing to the benefit of, the child; and

Collect, receive, manage, and dispose of the proceeds of any benefit plan as defined in s. 710.102, F.S.,<sup>42</sup> of which the minor is a beneficiary, participant, or owner.

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

This bill amends s. 549.09, F.S., to provide that a motorsport liability release signed by a natural guardian on behalf of minor is valid to the extent provided in s. 744.301, F.S. The bill also expands the definition of “nonspectators” to include a minor, if the minor’s natural guardian signed the motorsport liability release.

<sup>36</sup> A “closed-course motorsport facility” is defined as “a closed-course speedway or racetrack designed and intended for motor vehicle competition, exhibitions of speed, or other forms of recreation involving the use of motor vehicles, including motorcycles.” Section 549.09(1)(a), F.S.

<sup>37</sup> Section 549.09(2), F.S.

<sup>38</sup> Section 549.09(3), F.S.

<sup>39</sup> Section 744.102(9), F.S.

<sup>40</sup> See ch. 744, part III, F.S.

<sup>41</sup> Section 744.301(1), F.S.

<sup>42</sup> A benefit plan is defined as “a retirement plan and may include, but is not limited to, any pension, profit-sharing, stock-bonus, or stock-ownership plan or individual retirement account.” Section 710.102(2), F.S.

Additionally, the bill addresses the Florida Supreme Court's holding in *Kirton v. Fields*, by amending s. 744.301, F.S., to authorize the natural guardian of a minor child to waive and release any claim against the activity provider and its employees for the inherent risks involved in any activity. The bill does not specify whether the natural guardian may waive and release these claims in advance. The waiver and release may not grant civil immunity to any person or entity whose negligence, gross negligence, or intentional conduct causes injury to a minor child sustained in the course of an activity.

The bill defines "negligence" to mean "doing something that a reasonably careful person would not do under like circumstances or failing to do something that a reasonably careful person would do under like circumstances."

The bill also provides, that notwithstanding the above provisions, natural guardians are authorized, on behalf of their minor children, to sign waivers and releases in accordance with ch. 773, F.S., regarding equine activities, and s. 549.09, F.S., regarding motor sport activities.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2009.

#### **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. Other Constitutional Issues:

The fundamental right of parenting is a long-standing liberty interest recognized by both the United States and Florida constitutions. Because child-rearing is considered a fundamental right, parents have the inherent authority to make decisions about their children's welfare without interference from the government. Parental rights, however, are not absolute and, in certain situations, the state may, as *parens patriae*, intervene on behalf of the minor. Some Florida courts, including the Florida Supreme Court, have held that the "decision to absolve the provider of an activity from liability for any form of negligence (regardless of the inherent risk or danger in the activity) goes beyond the scope of determining which activity a person feels is appropriate for their child."<sup>43</sup> To the extent that this bill is seen as going against public policy and depriving a minor of the right to legal relief when the minor is injured, it could face constitutional scrutiny.

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<sup>43</sup> *Kirton*, 997 So. 2d at 357 (quoting *Fields*, 961 So. 2d at 1129).

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:****A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

**B. Private Sector Impact:**

This bill authorizes natural guardians to execute releases on behalf of their minor children for inherent risks involved in an activity; however, the bill does not recognize releases signed by natural guardians that waive negligence, gross negligence, or intentional conduct. It is unknown at this time whether, by authorizing releases for inherent risks only, commercial and community-based activities will need to purchase additional insurance due to concerns related to the risk of liability.

Also, by specifying that a release signed by a natural guardian on behalf of a minor is valid, this bill provides intent that the Legislature wishes to allow releases in motorsport activities to be executed on behalf of a minor. Therefore, if sued, motorsport facilities may rely on this bill for the notion that their releases are valid and not against public policy.

**C. Government Sector Impact:**

None.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

On line 58, the bill references any “waiver or release,” but on line 56 the bill references only that natural guardians may “waive” claims. To eliminate the possibility of confusion, the Legislature may wish to add the words “and release” after the word “waive” on line 56.

Also, on line 58 of the bill, the word “signed” may need to be inserted after the word “release.”

Additionally, on lines 56-57, the bill uses the terms “activity provider” and “its employees,” but on line 60 of the bill, the terms “person” and “entity” are used. It appears these terms were meant to relate to the same thing or things; however, there may be some confusion because of the use of different terms.

**VII. Related Issues:**

The bill amends s. 549.09, F.S., to provide that a motorsport liability release signed by a natural guardian on behalf of minor is valid *to the extent provided in s. 744.301, F.S.* The bill also amends s. 744.301, F.S., providing that natural guardians are authorized, on behalf of their minor children, to sign waivers and releases *in accordance with s. 545.09, F.S.* While there is nothing technically wrong with the structure of these two provisions, it does create a circular reading of the bill.

**VIII. Additional Information:**

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**  
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

**CS by Judiciary on April 15, 2009:**

The committee substitute combines SB 886 and SB 2268, and provides that a motorsport liability release signed by a natural guardian, rather than a parent or guardian, on behalf of a minor is valid. The committee substitute also amends the definition of “nonspectators” to include event participants who are minors, as long as the minor’s natural guardian signed a motorsport liability release. The committee substitute also eliminates a reference to the minor signing the motorsport liability release.

Additionally, the committee substitute provides that a natural guardian may, on behalf of his or her minor child, waive claims for the inherent risks involved in an activity, but that a waiver may not grant civil immunity to a person or entity whose negligence, gross negligence, or intentional conduct causes injury to a minor child. The committee substitute defines “negligence” to mean “doing something that a reasonably careful person would not do under like circumstances or failing to do something that a reasonably careful person would do under like circumstances.” In contrast, the original SB 886 provided that natural guardians had the authority, on behalf of their minor children, to waive and release, in advance, any claim or cause of action that could accrue to any of their minor children to the same extent that an adult may do so on his or her own behalf. Finally, the committee substitute provides that natural guardians are still allowed to sign waivers or releases, on behalf of their minor children, in accordance with ch. 773, F.S., relating to equine activities, and s. 549.09, F.S., regarding motor sport activities.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.