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By the Committee on Innovation, Industry, and Technology; and Senator Baxley

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A bill to be entitled An act relating to community associations; amending s. 514.0115, F.S.; exempting certain property association pools from Department of Health regulations; amending s. 627.714, F.S.; prohibiting subrogation rights against a condominium association under certain circumstances; creating s. 712.065, F.S.; defining the term "discriminatory restriction"; providing that discriminatory restrictions are unlawful, unenforceable, and declared null and void; providing that certain discriminatory restrictions are extinguished and severed from recorded title transactions; specifying that the recording of certain notices does not reimpose or preserve a discriminatory restriction; providing requirements for a parcel owner to remove a discriminatory restriction from a covenant or restriction; amending s. 718.111, F.S.; requiring that certain records be maintained for a specified time; prohibiting an association from requiring certain actions relating to the inspection of records; revising requirements relating to the posting of digital copies of certain documents by certain condominium associations; amending s. 718.112, F.S.; authorizing condominium associations to extinguish discriminatory restrictions; specifying that only board service that occurs on or after a specified date may be used for calculating a board member's term limit; providing requirements for certain notices; prohibiting an association from charging certain fees;

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providing an exception; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; deleting a prohibition against employing or contracting with certain service providers; amending s. 718.113, F.S.; defining the terms "natural gas fuel" and "natural gas fuel vehicle"; revising legislative findings; revising requirements for electric vehicle charging stations; providing requirements for the installation of natural gas fuel stations on property governed by condominium associations; amending s. 718.1255, F.S.; authorizing parties to initiate presuit mediation under certain circumstances; specifying when arbitration is binding on the parties; providing requirements for presuit mediation; amending s. 718.303, F.S.; revising requirements for certain actions for failure to comply with specified provisions; revising requirements for certain fines; amending s. 718.5014, F.S.; revising where the principal office of the Office of the Condominium Ombudsman must be maintained; amending s. 719.103, F.S.; revising the definition of the term "unit" to specify that an interest in a cooperative unit is an interest in real property; amending s. 719.104, F.S.; prohibiting an association from requiring certain actions relating to the inspection of records; making technical changes; amending s. 719.106, F.S.; revising provisions relating to a quorum and voting rights for members remotely participating in meetings; authorizing cooperative associations to extinguish discriminatory

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restrictions; amending s. 720.303, F.S.; authorizing an association to adopt procedures for electronic meeting notices; revising the documents that constitute the official records of an association; amending s. 720.305, F.S.; providing requirements for certain fines; amending s. 720.306, F.S.; revising requirements for providing certain notices; amending s. 720.3075, F.S.; authorizing homeowners' associations to extinguish discriminatory restrictions; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of section 514.0115, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

514.0115 Exemptions from supervision or regulation; variances.—

(2) (a) Pools serving condominium, cooperative, and homeowners' associations, as well as other property associations, which have no more than 32 condominium or cooperative units or parcels and which are not operated as a public lodging establishments are establishment shall be exempt from supervision under this chapter, except for water quality.

Section 2. Subsection (4) of section 627.714, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

- 627.714 Residential condominium unit owner coverage; loss assessment coverage required.—
- (4) Every individual unit owner's residential property policy must contain a provision stating that the coverage

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afforded by such policy is excess coverage over the amount recoverable under any other policy covering the same property. If a condominium association's insurance policy does not provide rights for subrogation against the unit owners in the association, an insurance policy issued to an individual unit owner located in the association may not provide rights of subrogation against the condominium association.

Section 3. Section 712.065, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

712.065 Extinguishment of discriminatory restrictions.-

- (1) As used in this section, the term "discriminatory restriction" means a provision in a title transaction recorded in this state which restricts the ownership, occupancy, or use of any real property in this state by any natural person on the basis of a characteristic that has been held, or is held after July 1, 2020, by the United States Supreme Court or the Florida Supreme Court to be protected against discrimination under the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution or under s. 2, Art. I of the State Constitution, including race, color, national origin, religion, gender, or physical disability.
- (2) A discriminatory restriction is not enforceable in this state, and all discriminatory restrictions contained in any title transaction recorded in this state are unlawful, are unenforceable, and are declared null and void. Any discriminatory restriction contained in a previously recorded title transaction is extinguished and severed from the recorded title transaction and the remainder of the title transaction remains enforceable and effective. The recording of any notice preserving or protecting interests or rights pursuant to s.

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712.05 does not reimpose or preserve any discriminatory restriction that is extinguished under this section.

- (3) Upon request of a parcel owner, a discriminatory restriction appearing in a covenant or restriction affecting the parcel may be removed from the covenant or restriction by an amendment approved by a majority vote of the board of directors of the respective property owners' association or an owners' association in which all owners may voluntarily join, notwithstanding any other requirements for approval of an amendment of the covenant or restriction. Unless the amendment also changes other provisions of the covenant or restriction, the recording of an amendment removing a discriminatory restriction does not constitute a title transaction occurring after the root of title for purposes of s. 712.03(4).
- Section 4. Paragraphs (a), (b), (c), and (g) of subsection (12) of section 718.111, Florida Statutes, are amended to read: 718.111 The association.—
 - (12) OFFICIAL RECORDS.-
- (a) From the inception of the association, the association shall maintain each of the following items, if applicable, which constitutes the official records of the association:
- 1. A copy of the plans, permits, warranties, and other items provided by the developer pursuant to s. 718.301(4).
- 2. A photocopy of the recorded declaration of condominium of each condominium operated by the association and each amendment to each declaration.
- 3. A photocopy of the recorded bylaws of the association and each amendment to the bylaws.
 - 4. A certified copy of the articles of incorporation of the

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association, or other documents creating the association, and each amendment thereto.

- 5. A copy of the current rules of the association.
- 6. A book or books that contain the minutes of all meetings of the association, the board of administration, and the unit owners.
- 7. A current roster of all unit owners and their mailing addresses, unit identifications, voting certifications, and, if known, telephone numbers. The association shall also maintain the e-mail addresses and facsimile numbers of unit owners consenting to receive notice by electronic transmission. The e-mail addresses and facsimile numbers are not accessible to unit owners if consent to receive notice by electronic transmission is not provided in accordance with sub-subparagraph (c)3.e. However, the association is not liable for an inadvertent disclosure of the e-mail address or facsimile number for receiving electronic transmission of notices.
- 8. All current insurance policies of the association and condominiums operated by the association.
- 9. A current copy of any management agreement, lease, or other contract to which the association is a party or under which the association or the unit owners have an obligation or responsibility.
- 10. Bills of sale or transfer for all property owned by the association.
- 11. Accounting records for the association and separate accounting records for each condominium that the association operates. Any person who knowingly or intentionally defaces or destroys such records, or who knowingly or intentionally fails

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to create or maintain such records, with the intent of causing

- harm to the association or one or more of its members, is
- 177 personally subject to a civil penalty pursuant to s.
- 718.501(1)(d). The accounting records must include, but are not
- 179 limited to:
- a. Accurate, itemized, and detailed records of all receipts
- 181 and expenditures.
- b. A current account and a monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly statement of the account for each unit designating the name of
- the unit owner, the due date and amount of each assessment, the
- amount paid on the account, and the balance due.
- 186 c. All audits, reviews, accounting statements, and
- 187 financial reports of the association or condominium.
- d. All contracts for work to be performed. Bids for work to
- be performed are also considered official records and must be
- maintained by the association for at least 1 year after receipt
- of the bid.

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- 192 12. Ballots, sign-in sheets, voting proxies, and all other
- 193 papers and electronic records relating to voting by unit owners,
- 194 which must be maintained for 1 year from the date of the
- election, vote, or meeting to which the document relates,
- 196 notwithstanding paragraph (b).
 - 13. All rental records if the association is acting as
- 198 agent for the rental of condominium units.
- 199 14. A copy of the current question and answer sheet as
- 200 described in s. 718.504.
- 201 15. All other written records of the association not 202 specifically included in the foregoing which are related to the
- 203 operation of the association.

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 $\frac{16.}{10.}$ A copy of the inspection report as described in s. 718.301(4)(p).

16.17. Bids for materials, equipment, or services.

- 17. All other written records of the association not specifically included in subparagraphs 1.-16. which are related to the operation of the association.
- (b) The official records specified in subparagraphs (a) 1.-6. must be permanently maintained from the inception of the association. Bids for work to be performed or for materials, equipment, or services must be maintained for at least 1 year after receipt of the bid. All other official records must be maintained within the state for at least 7 years, unless otherwise provided by general law. The records of the association shall be made available to a unit owner within 45 miles of the condominium property or within the county in which the condominium property is located within 10 working days after receipt of a written request by the board or its designee. However, such distance requirement does not apply to an association governing a timeshare condominium. This paragraph may be complied with by having a copy of the official records of the association available for inspection or copying on the condominium property or association property, or the association may offer the option of making the records available to a unit owner electronically via the Internet or by allowing the records to be viewed in electronic format on a computer screen and printed upon request. The association is not responsible for the use or misuse of the information provided to an association member or his or her authorized representative in pursuant to the compliance with requirements of this chapter unless the

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association has an affirmative duty not to disclose such information under pursuant to this chapter.

- (c) 1. The official records of the association are open to inspection by any association member or the authorized representative of such member at all reasonable times. The right to inspect the records includes the right to make or obtain copies, at the reasonable expense, if any, of the member or authorized representative of such member. A renter of a unit has a right to inspect and copy the association's bylaws and rules. The association may adopt reasonable rules regarding the frequency, time, location, notice, and manner of record inspections and copying, but may not require a member to demonstrate any purpose or state any reason for the inspection. The failure of an association to provide the records within 10 working days after receipt of a written request creates a rebuttable presumption that the association willfully failed to comply with this paragraph. A unit owner who is denied access to official records is entitled to the actual damages or minimum damages for the association's willful failure to comply. Minimum damages are \$50 per calendar day for up to 10 days, beginning on the 11th working day after receipt of the written request. The failure to permit inspection entitles any person prevailing in an enforcement action to recover reasonable attorney fees from the person in control of the records who, directly or indirectly, knowingly denied access to the records.
- 2. Any person who knowingly or intentionally defaces or destroys accounting records that are required by this chapter to be maintained during the period for which such records are required to be maintained, or who knowingly or intentionally

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fails to create or maintain accounting records that are required to be created or maintained, with the intent of causing harm to the association or one or more of its members, is personally subject to a civil penalty under pursuant to s. 718.501(1)(d).

- 3. The association shall maintain an adequate number of copies of the declaration, articles of incorporation, bylaws, and rules, and all amendments to each of the foregoing, as well as the question and answer sheet as described in s. 718.504 and year-end financial information required under this section, on the condominium property to ensure their availability to unit owners and prospective purchasers, and may charge its actual costs for preparing and furnishing these documents to those requesting the documents. An association shall allow a member or his or her authorized representative to use a portable device, including a smartphone, tablet, portable scanner, or any other technology capable of scanning or taking photographs, to make an electronic copy of the official records in lieu of the association's providing the member or his or her authorized representative with a copy of such records. The association may not charge a member or his or her authorized representative for the use of a portable device. Notwithstanding this paragraph, the following records are not accessible to unit owners:
- a. Any record protected by the lawyer-client privilege as described in s. 90.502 and any record protected by the work-product privilege, including a record prepared by an association attorney or prepared at the attorney's express direction, which reflects a mental impression, conclusion, litigation strategy, or legal theory of the attorney or the association, and which was prepared exclusively for civil or criminal litigation or for

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adversarial administrative proceedings, or which was prepared in anticipation of such litigation or proceedings until the conclusion of the litigation or proceedings.

- b. Information obtained by an association in connection with the approval of the lease, sale, or other transfer of a unit.
- c. Personnel records of association or management company employees, including, but not limited to, disciplinary, payroll, health, and insurance records. For purposes of this subsubparagraph, the term "personnel records" does not include written employment agreements with an association employee or management company, or budgetary or financial records that indicate the compensation paid to an association employee.
 - d. Medical records of unit owners.
- e. Social security numbers, driver license numbers, credit card numbers, e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, facsimile numbers, emergency contact information, addresses of a unit owner other than as provided to fulfill the association's notice requirements, and other personal identifying information of any person, excluding the person's name, unit designation, mailing address, property address, and any address, e-mail address, or facsimile number provided to the association to fulfill the association's notice requirements. Notwithstanding the restrictions in this sub-subparagraph, an association may print and distribute to unit parcel owners a directory containing the name, unit parcel address, and all telephone numbers of each unit parcel owner. However, an owner may exclude his or her telephone numbers from the directory by so requesting in writing to the association. An owner may consent in writing to the

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disclosure of other contact information described in this subsubparagraph. The association is not liable for the inadvertent disclosure of information that is protected under this subsubparagraph if the information is included in an official record of the association and is voluntarily provided by an owner and not requested by the association.

- f. Electronic security measures that are used by the association to safeguard data, including passwords.
- g. The software and operating system used by the association which allow the manipulation of data, even if the owner owns a copy of the same software used by the association. The data is part of the official records of the association.
- (g)1. By January 1, 2019, an association managing a condominium with 150 or more units which does not contain timeshare units shall post digital copies of the documents specified in subparagraph 2. on its website or make such documents available through an application that can be downloaded on a mobile device.
 - a. The association's website or application must be:
- (I) An independent website, application, or web portal wholly owned and operated by the association; or
- (II) A website, application, or web portal operated by a third-party provider with whom the association owns, leases, rents, or otherwise obtains the right to operate a web page, subpage, web portal, or collection of subpages or web portals, or application which is dedicated to the association's activities and on which required notices, records, and documents may be posted or made available by the association.
 - b. The association's website or application must be

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accessible through the Internet and must contain a subpage, web portal, or other protected electronic location that is inaccessible to the general public and accessible only to unit owners and employees of the association.

- c. Upon a unit owner's written request, the association must provide the unit owner with a username and password and access to the protected sections of the association's website or application that contain any notices, records, or documents that must be electronically provided.
- 2. A current copy of the following documents must be posted in digital format on the association's website or application:
- a. The recorded declaration of condominium of each condominium operated by the association and each amendment to each declaration.
- b. The recorded bylaws of the association and each amendment to the bylaws.
- c. The articles of incorporation of the association, or other documents creating the association, and each amendment to the articles of incorporation or other documents thereto. The copy posted pursuant to this sub-subparagraph must be a copy of the articles of incorporation filed with the Department of State.
 - d. The rules of the association.
- e. A list of all executory contracts or documents to which the association is a party or under which the association or the unit owners have an obligation or responsibility and, after bidding for the related materials, equipment, or services has closed, a list of bids received by the association within the past year. Summaries of bids for materials, equipment, or

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services which exceed \$500 must be maintained on the website or application for 1 year. In lieu of summaries, complete copies of the bids may be posted.

- f. The annual budget required by s. 718.112(2)(f) and any proposed budget to be considered at the annual meeting.
- g. The financial report required by subsection (13) and any monthly income or expense statement to be considered at a meeting.
- h. The certification of each director required by s. 718.112(2)(d)4.b.
- i. All contracts or transactions between the association and any director, officer, corporation, firm, or association that is not an affiliated condominium association or any other entity in which an association director is also a director or officer and financially interested.
- j. Any contract or document regarding a conflict of interest or possible conflict of interest as provided in ss. 468.436(2) (b) 6. and 718.3027(3).
- k. The notice of any unit owner meeting and the agenda for the meeting, as required by s. 718.112(2)(d)3., no later than 14 days before the meeting. The notice must be posted in plain view on the front page of the website or application, or on a separate subpage of the website or application labeled "Notices" which is conspicuously visible and linked from the front page. The association must also post on its website or application any document to be considered and voted on by the owners during the meeting or any document listed on the agenda at least 7 days before the meeting at which the document or the information within the document will be considered.

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1. Notice of any board meeting, the agenda, and any other document required for the meeting as required by s. 718.112(2)(c), which must be posted no later than the date required for notice under pursuant to s. 718.112(2)(c).

- 3. The association shall ensure that the information and records described in paragraph (c), which are not allowed to be accessible to unit owners, are not posted on the association's website or application. If protected information or information restricted from being accessible to unit owners is included in documents that are required to be posted on the association's website or application, the association shall ensure the information is redacted before posting the documents online. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the association or its agent is not liable for disclosing information that is protected or restricted under pursuant to this paragraph unless such disclosure was made with a knowing or intentional disregard of the protected or restricted nature of such information.
- 4. The failure of the association to post information required under subparagraph 2. is not in and of itself sufficient to invalidate any action or decision of the association's board or its committees.
- Section 5. Paragraphs (d), (i), (k), and (p) of subsection (2) of section 718.112, Florida Statutes, are amended, and paragraph (c) is added to subsection (1) of that section, to read:
 - 718.112 Bylaws.-
 - (1) GENERALLY.-
- (c) The association may extinguish a discriminatory restriction, as defined in s. 712.065(1), pursuant to s.

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712.065.

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(2) REQUIRED PROVISIONS.—The bylaws shall provide for the following and, if they do not do so, shall be deemed to include the following:

- (d) Unit owner meetings.-
- 1. An annual meeting of the unit owners must be held at the location provided in the association bylaws and, if the bylaws are silent as to the location, the meeting must be held within 45 miles of the condominium property. However, such distance requirement does not apply to an association governing a timeshare condominium.
- 2. Unless the bylaws provide otherwise, a vacancy on the board caused by the expiration of a director's term must be filled by electing a new board member, and the election must be by secret ballot. An election is not required if the number of vacancies equals or exceeds the number of candidates. For purposes of this paragraph, the term "candidate" means an eligible person who has timely submitted the written notice, as described in sub-subparagraph 4.a., of his or her intention to become a candidate. Except in a timeshare or nonresidential condominium, or if the staggered term of a board member does not expire until a later annual meeting, or if all members' terms would otherwise expire but there are no candidates, the terms of all board members expire at the annual meeting, and such members may stand for reelection unless prohibited by the bylaws. Board members may serve terms longer than 1 year if permitted by the bylaws or articles of incorporation. A board member may not serve more than 8 consecutive years unless approved by an affirmative vote of unit owners representing two-thirds of all

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votes cast in the election or unless there are not enough eligible candidates to fill the vacancies on the board at the time of the vacancy. Only board service that occurs on or after July 1, 2018, may be used when calculating a board member's term limit. If the number of board members whose terms expire at the annual meeting equals or exceeds the number of candidates, the candidates become members of the board effective upon the adjournment of the annual meeting. Unless the bylaws provide otherwise, any remaining vacancies shall be filled by the affirmative vote of the majority of the directors making up the newly constituted board even if the directors constitute less than a quorum or there is only one director. In a residential condominium association of more than 10 units or in a residential condominium association that does not include timeshare units or timeshare interests, co-owners of a unit may not serve as members of the board of directors at the same time unless they own more than one unit or unless there are not enough eligible candidates to fill the vacancies on the board at the time of the vacancy. A unit owner in a residential condominium desiring to be a candidate for board membership must comply with sub-subparagraph 4.a. and must be eligible to be a candidate to serve on the board of directors at the time of the deadline for submitting a notice of intent to run in order to have his or her name listed as a proper candidate on the ballot or to serve on the board. A person who has been suspended or removed by the division under this chapter, or who is delinquent in the payment of any monetary obligation due to the association, is not eligible to be a candidate for board membership and may not be listed on the ballot. A person who has

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been convicted of any felony in this state or in a United States District or Territorial Court, or who has been convicted of any offense in another jurisdiction which would be considered a felony if committed in this state, is not eligible for board membership unless such felon's civil rights have been restored for at least 5 years as of the date such person seeks election to the board. The validity of an action by the board is not affected if it is later determined that a board member is ineligible for board membership due to having been convicted of a felony. This subparagraph does not limit the term of a member of the board of a nonresidential or timeshare condominium.

3. The bylaws must provide the method of calling meetings of unit owners, including annual meetings. Written notice of an annual meeting must include an agenda; , must be mailed, hand delivered, or electronically transmitted to each unit owner at least 14 days before the annual meeting; τ and t be posted in a conspicuous place on the condominium property at least 14 continuous days before the annual meeting. Written notice of a meeting other than an annual meeting must include an agenda; be mailed, hand delivered, or electronically transmitted to each unit owner; and be posted in a conspicuous place on the condominium property in accordance with the minimum period of time for posting a notice as set forth in the bylaws, or if the bylaws do not provide such notice requirements, at least 14 continuous days before the meeting. Upon notice to the unit owners, the board shall, by duly adopted rule, designate a specific location on the condominium property where all notices of unit owner meetings must be posted. This requirement does not apply if there is no condominium property for posting notices.

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In lieu of, or in addition to, the physical posting of meeting notices, the association may, by reasonable rule, adopt a procedure for conspicuously posting and repeatedly broadcasting the notice and the agenda on a closed-circuit cable television system serving the condominium association. However, if broadcast notice is used in lieu of a notice posted physically on the condominium property, the notice and agenda must be broadcast at least four times every broadcast hour of each day that a posted notice is otherwise required under this section. If broadcast notice is provided, the notice and agenda must be broadcast in a manner and for a sufficient continuous length of time so as to allow an average reader to observe the notice and read and comprehend the entire content of the notice and the agenda. In addition to any of the authorized means of providing notice of a meeting of the board, the association may, by rule, adopt a procedure for conspicuously posting the meeting notice and the agenda on a website serving the condominium association for at least the minimum period of time for which a notice of a meeting is also required to be physically posted on the condominium property. Any rule adopted shall, in addition to other matters, include a requirement that the association send an electronic notice in the same manner as a notice for a meeting of the members, which must include a hyperlink to the website where the notice is posted, to unit owners whose e-mail addresses are included in the association's official records. Unless a unit owner waives in writing the right to receive notice of the annual meeting, such notice must be hand delivered, mailed, or electronically transmitted to each unit owner. Notice for meetings and notice for all other purposes

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must be mailed to each unit owner at the address last furnished to the association by the unit owner, or hand delivered to each unit owner. However, if a unit is owned by more than one person, the association must provide notice to the address that the developer identifies for that purpose and thereafter as one or more of the owners of the unit advise the association in writing, or if no address is given or the owners of the unit do not agree, to the address provided on the deed of record. An officer of the association, or the manager or other person providing notice of the association meeting, must provide an affidavit or United States Postal Service certificate of mailing, to be included in the official records of the association affirming that the notice was mailed or hand delivered in accordance with this provision.

- 4. The members of the board of a residential condominium shall be elected by written ballot or voting machine. Proxies may not be used in electing the board in general elections or elections to fill vacancies caused by recall, resignation, or otherwise, unless otherwise provided in this chapter. This subparagraph does not apply to an association governing a timeshare condominium.
- a. At least 60 days before a scheduled election, the association shall mail, deliver, or electronically transmit, by separate association mailing or included in another association mailing, delivery, or transmission, including regularly published newsletters, to each unit owner entitled to a vote, a first notice of the date of the election. A unit owner or other eligible person desiring to be a candidate for the board must give written notice of his or her intent to be a candidate to

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the association at least 40 days before a scheduled election. Together with the written notice and agenda as set forth in subparagraph 3., the association shall mail, deliver, or electronically transmit a second notice of the election to all unit owners entitled to vote, together with a ballot that lists all candidates, not less than 14 days or more than 34 days before the date of the election. Upon request of a candidate, an information sheet, no larger than 8 1/2 inches by 11 inches, which must be furnished by the candidate at least 35 days before the election, must be included with the mailing, delivery, or transmission of the ballot, with the costs of mailing, delivery, or electronic transmission and copying to be borne by the association. The association is not liable for the contents of the information sheets prepared by the candidates. In order to reduce costs, the association may print or duplicate the information sheets on both sides of the paper. The division shall by rule establish voting procedures consistent with this sub-subparagraph, including rules establishing procedures for giving notice by electronic transmission and rules providing for the secrecy of ballots. Elections shall be decided by a plurality of ballots cast. There is no quorum requirement; however, at least 20 percent of the eligible voters must cast a ballot in order to have a valid election. A unit owner may not authorize any other person to vote his or her ballot, and any ballots improperly cast are invalid. A unit owner who violates this provision may be fined by the association in accordance with s. 718.303. A unit owner who needs assistance in casting the ballot for the reasons stated in s. 101.051 may obtain such assistance. The regular election must occur on the date of the

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annual meeting. Notwithstanding this sub-subparagraph, an election is not required unless more candidates file notices of intent to run or are nominated than board vacancies exist.

b. Within 90 days after being elected or appointed to the board of an association of a residential condominium, each newly elected or appointed director shall certify in writing to the secretary of the association that he or she has read the association's declaration of condominium, articles of incorporation, bylaws, and current written policies; that he or she will work to uphold such documents and policies to the best of his or her ability; and that he or she will faithfully discharge his or her fiduciary responsibility to the association's members. In lieu of this written certification, within 90 days after being elected or appointed to the board, the newly elected or appointed director may submit a certificate of having satisfactorily completed the educational curriculum administered by a division-approved condominium education provider within 1 year before or 90 days after the date of election or appointment. The written certification or educational certificate is valid and does not have to be resubmitted as long as the director serves on the board without interruption. A director of an association of a residential condominium who fails to timely file the written certification or educational certificate is suspended from service on the board until he or she complies with this sub-subparagraph. The board may temporarily fill the vacancy during the period of suspension. The secretary shall cause the association to retain a director's written certification or educational certificate for inspection by the members for 5 years after a director's

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election or the duration of the director's uninterrupted tenure, whichever is longer. Failure to have such written certification or educational certificate on file does not affect the validity of any board action.

- c. Any challenge to the election process must be commenced within 60 days after the election results are announced.
- 5. Any approval by unit owners called for by this chapter or the applicable declaration or bylaws, including, but not limited to, the approval requirement in s. 718.111(8), must be made at a duly noticed meeting of unit owners and is subject to all requirements of this chapter or the applicable condominium documents relating to unit owner decisionmaking, except that unit owners may take action by written agreement, without meetings, on matters for which action by written agreement without meetings is expressly allowed by the applicable bylaws or declaration or any law that provides for such action.
- 6. Unit owners may waive notice of specific meetings if allowed by the applicable bylaws or declaration or any law. Notice of meetings of the board of administration, unit owner meetings, except unit owner meetings called to recall board members under paragraph (j), and committee meetings may be given by electronic transmission to unit owners who consent to receive notice by electronic transmission. A unit owner who consents to receiving notices by electronic transmission is solely responsible for removing or bypassing filters that block receipt of mass <u>e-mails</u> emails sent to members on behalf of the association in the course of giving electronic notices.
- 7. Unit owners have the right to participate in meetings of unit owners with reference to all designated agenda items.

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However, the association may adopt reasonable rules governing the frequency, duration, and manner of unit owner participation.

- 8. A unit owner may tape record or videotape a meeting of the unit owners subject to reasonable rules adopted by the division.
- 9. Unless otherwise provided in the bylaws, any vacancy occurring on the board before the expiration of a term may be filled by the affirmative vote of the majority of the remaining directors, even if the remaining directors constitute less than a quorum, or by the sole remaining director. In the alternative, a board may hold an election to fill the vacancy, in which case the election procedures must conform to sub-subparagraph 4.a. unless the association governs 10 units or fewer and has opted out of the statutory election process, in which case the bylaws of the association control. Unless otherwise provided in the bylaws, a board member appointed or elected under this section shall fill the vacancy for the unexpired term of the seat being filled. Filling vacancies created by recall is governed by paragraph (j) and rules adopted by the division.
- 10. This chapter does not limit the use of general or limited proxies, require the use of general or limited proxies, or require the use of a written ballot or voting machine for any agenda item or election at any meeting of a timeshare condominium association or nonresidential condominium association.

Notwithstanding subparagraph (b)2. and sub-subparagraph 4.a., an association of 10 or fewer units may, by affirmative vote of a majority of the total voting interests, provide for different

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voting and election procedures in its bylaws, which may be by a proxy specifically delineating the different voting and election procedures. The different voting and election procedures may provide for elections to be conducted by limited or general proxy.

(i) Transfer fees.—An association may not no charge an applicant any fees, except the actual costs of any background check or screening performed shall be made by the association, or any body thereof in connection with the sale, mortgage, lease, sublease, or other transfer of a unit unless the association is required to approve such transfer and a fee for such approval is provided for in the declaration, articles, or bylaws. Except for the actual costs of any background check or screening performed by the association, any such fee may be preset, but may not in no event may such fee exceed \$100 per applicant other than spouses or parent and dependent child, who husband/wife or parent/dependent child, which are considered one applicant. However, if the lease or sublease is a renewal of a lease or sublease with the same lessee or sublessee, a charge may not no charge shall be made. The foregoing notwithstanding, an association may, if the authority to do so appears in the declaration, articles, or bylaws, require that a prospective lessee place a security deposit, in an amount not to exceed the equivalent of 1 month's rent, into an escrow account maintained by the association. The security deposit shall protect against damages to the common elements or association property. Payment of interest, claims against the deposit, refunds, and disputes under this paragraph shall be handled in the same fashion as provided in part II of chapter 83.

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(k) <u>Alternative Dispute Resolution</u> Arbitration.— There <u>must shall</u> be a provision for mandatory <u>alternative dispute</u>

<u>resolution nonbinding arbitration</u> as provided for in s. 718.1255 for any residential condominium.

(p) Service providers; conflicts of interest. An association, which is not a timeshare condominium association, may not employ or contract with any service provider that is owned or operated by a board member or with any person who has a financial relationship with a board member or officer, or a relative within the third degree of consanguinity by blood or marriage of a board member or officer. This paragraph does not apply to a service provider in which a board member or officer, or a relative within the third degree of consanguinity by blood or marriage of a board member or officer, owns less than 1 percent of the equity shares.

Section 6. Subsection (8) of section 718.113, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

- 718.113 Maintenance; limitation upon improvement; display of flag; hurricane shutters and protection; display of religious decorations.—
- (8) The Legislature finds that the use of electric and natural gas fuel vehicles conserves and protects the state's environmental resources, provides significant economic savings to drivers, and serves an important public interest. The participation of condominium associations is essential to the state's efforts to conserve and protect the state's environmental resources and provide economic savings to drivers. For purposes of this subsection, the term "natural gas fuel" has the same meaning as in s. 206.9951, and the term "natural gas

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fuel vehicle" means any motor vehicle, as defined in s.

320.01(1), powered by natural gas fuel. Therefore, the
installation of an electric vehicle charging or natural gas fuel
station shall be governed as follows:

- (a) A declaration of condominium or restrictive covenant may not prohibit or be enforced so as to prohibit any unit owner from installing an electric vehicle charging or natural gas fuel station within the boundaries of the unit owner's limited common element or exclusively designated parking area. The board of administration of a condominium association may not prohibit a unit owner from installing an electric vehicle charging station for an electric vehicle, as defined in s. 320.01, or a natural gas fuel station for a natural gas fuel vehicle within the boundaries of his or her limited common element or exclusively designated parking area. The installation of such charging or fuel stations are subject to the provisions of this subsection.
- (b) The installation may not cause irreparable damage to the condominium property.
- (c) The electricity for the electric vehicle charging or natural gas fuel station must be separately metered or metered by an embedded meter and payable by the unit owner installing such charging or fuel station or by his or her successor.
- (d) The cost for supply and storage of the natural gas fuel must be paid by the unit owner installing the natural gas fuel station or by his or her successor.
- (e) (d) The unit owner who is installing an electric vehicle charging or natural gas fuel station is responsible for the costs of installation, operation, maintenance, and repair, including, but not limited to, hazard and liability insurance.

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The association may enforce payment of such costs $\underline{\text{under}}$ $\underline{\text{pursuant}}$ to s. 718.116.

- (f) (e) If the unit owner or his or her successor decides there is no longer a need for the electronic vehicle charging or natural gas fuel station, such person is responsible for the cost of removal of such the electronic vehicle charging or fuel station. The association may enforce payment of such costs under pursuant to s. 718.116.
- (g) The unit owner installing, maintaining, or removing the electric vehicle charging or natural gas fuel station is responsible for complying with all federal, state, or local laws and regulations applicable to such installation, maintenance, or removal.
 - (h) (f) The association may require the unit owner to:
- 1. Comply with bona fide safety requirements, consistent with applicable building codes or recognized safety standards, for the protection of persons and property.
- 2. Comply with reasonable architectural standards adopted by the association that govern the dimensions, placement, or external appearance of the electric vehicle charging or natural gas fuel station, provided that such standards may not prohibit the installation of such charging or fuel station or substantially increase the cost thereof.
- 3. Engage the services of a licensed and registered <u>firm</u> electrical contractor or engineer familiar with the installation <u>or removal</u> and core requirements of an electric vehicle charging <u>or natural gas fuel</u> station.
- 4. Provide a certificate of insurance naming the association as an additional insured on the owner's insurance

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policy for any claim related to the installation, maintenance, or use of the electric vehicle charging <u>or natural gas fuel</u> station within 14 days after receiving the association's approval to install such charging <u>or fuel</u> station <u>or notice to provide such a certificate</u>.

- 5. Reimburse the association for the actual cost of any increased insurance premium amount attributable to the electric vehicle charging or natural gas fuel station within 14 days after receiving the association's insurance premium invoice.
- (i) (g) The association provides an implied easement across the common elements of the condominium property to the unit owner for purposes of the installation of the electric vehicle charging or natural gas fuel station installation, and the furnishing of electrical power or natural gas fuel supply, including any necessary equipment, to such charging or fuel station, subject to the requirements of this subsection.

Section 7. Section 718.1255, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

- 718.1255 Alternative dispute resolution; voluntary mediation; mandatory nonbinding arbitration; legislative findings.—
- (1) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term "dispute" means any disagreement between two or more parties that involves:
- (a) The authority of the board of directors, under this chapter or association document to:
- 1. Require any owner to take any action, or not to take any action, involving that owner's unit or the appurtenances thereto.

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- 2. Alter or add to a common area or element.
- (b) The failure of a governing body, when required by this chapter or an association document, to:
 - 1. Properly conduct elections.
 - 2. Give adequate notice of meetings or other actions.
 - 3. Properly conduct meetings.
 - 4. Allow inspection of books and records.
 - (c) A plan of termination pursuant to s. 718.117.

"Dispute" does not include any disagreement that primarily involves: title to any unit or common element; the interpretation or enforcement of any warranty; the levy of a fee or assessment, or the collection of an assessment levied against a party; the eviction or other removal of a tenant from a unit; alleged breaches of fiduciary duty by one or more directors; or claims for damages to a unit based upon the alleged failure of the association to maintain the common elements or condominium property.

- (2) VOLUNTARY MEDIATION.—Voluntary mediation through Citizen Dispute Settlement Centers as provided for in s. 44.201 is encouraged.
 - (3) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.—
- (a) The Legislature finds that unit owners are frequently at a disadvantage when litigating against an association. Specifically, a condominium association, with its statutory assessment authority, is often more able to bear the costs and expenses of litigation than the unit owner who must rely on his or her own financial resources to satisfy the costs of litigation against the association.

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(b) The Legislature finds that alternative dispute resolution has been making progress in reducing court dockets and trials and in offering a more efficient, cost-effective option to court litigation. However, the Legislature also finds that alternative dispute resolution should not be used as a mechanism to encourage the filing of frivolous or nuisance suits.

- (c) There exists a need to develop a flexible means of alternative dispute resolution that directs disputes to the most efficient means of resolution.
- (d) The high cost and significant delay of circuit court litigation faced by unit owners in the state can be alleviated by requiring nonbinding arbitration and mediation in appropriate cases, thereby reducing delay and attorney's fees while preserving the right of either party to have its case heard by a jury, if applicable, in a court of law.
- (4) MANDATORY NONBINDING ARBITRATION AND MEDIATION OF DISPUTES.—The Division of Florida Condominiums, Timeshares, and Mobile Homes of the Department of Business and Professional Regulation may employ full—time attorneys to act as arbitrators to conduct the arbitration hearings provided by this chapter. The division may also certify attorneys who are not employed by the division to act as arbitrators to conduct the arbitration hearings provided by this chapter. No person may be employed by the department as a full—time arbitrator unless he or she is a member in good standing of The Florida Bar. A person may only be certified by the division to act as an arbitrator if he or she has been a member in good standing of The Florida Bar for at least 5 years and has mediated or arbitrated at least 10

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disputes involving condominiums in this state during the 3 years immediately preceding the date of application, mediated or arbitrated at least 30 disputes in any subject area in this state during the 3 years immediately preceding the date of application, or attained board certification in real estate law or condominium and planned development law from The Florida Bar. Arbitrator certification is valid for 1 year. An arbitrator who does not maintain the minimum qualifications for initial certification may not have his or her certification renewed. The department may not enter into a legal services contract for an arbitration hearing under this chapter with an attorney who is not a certified arbitrator unless a certified arbitrator is not available within 50 miles of the dispute. The department shall adopt rules of procedure to govern such arbitration hearings including mediation incident thereto. The decision of an arbitrator shall be final; however, a decision shall not be deemed final agency action. Nothing in this provision shall be construed to foreclose parties from proceeding in a trial de novo unless the parties have agreed that the arbitration is binding. If judicial proceedings are initiated, the final decision of the arbitrator shall be admissible in evidence in the trial de novo.

(a) Prior to the institution of court litigation, a party to a dispute shall <u>either</u> petition the division for nonbinding arbitration <u>or initiate presuit mediation as provided in subsection (5). Arbitration shall be binding on the parties if all parties in arbitration agree to be bound in a writing filed <u>in arbitration</u>. The petition must be accompanied by a filing fee in the amount of \$50. Filing fees collected under this section</u>

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must be used to defray the expenses of the alternative dispute resolution program.

- (b) The petition must recite, and have attached thereto, supporting proof that the petitioner gave the respondents:
- 1. Advance written notice of the specific nature of the dispute;
- 2. A demand for relief, and a reasonable opportunity to comply or to provide the relief; and
- 3. Notice of the intention to file an arbitration petition or other legal action in the absence of a resolution of the dispute.

Failure to include the allegations or proof of compliance with these prerequisites requires dismissal of the petition without prejudice.

- (c) Upon receipt, the petition shall be promptly reviewed by the division to determine the existence of a dispute and compliance with the requirements of paragraphs (a) and (b). If emergency relief is required and is not available through arbitration, a motion to stay the arbitration may be filed. The motion must be accompanied by a verified petition alleging facts that, if proven, would support entry of a temporary injunction, and if an appropriate motion and supporting papers are filed, the division may abate the arbitration pending a court hearing and disposition of a motion for temporary injunction.
- (d) Upon determination by the division that a dispute exists and that the petition substantially meets the requirements of paragraphs (a) and (b) and any other applicable rules, the division shall assign or enter into a contract with

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an arbitrator and serve a copy of the petition upon all respondents. The arbitrator shall conduct a hearing within 30 days after being assigned or entering into a contract unless the petition is withdrawn or a continuance is granted for good cause shown.

- (e) Before or after the filing of the respondents' answer to the petition, any party may request that the arbitrator refer the case to mediation under this section and any rules adopted by the division. Upon receipt of a request for mediation, the division shall promptly contact the parties to determine if there is agreement that mediation would be appropriate. If all parties agree, the dispute must be referred to mediation. Notwithstanding a lack of an agreement by all parties, the arbitrator may refer a dispute to mediation at any time.
- (f) Upon referral of a case to mediation, the parties must select a mutually acceptable mediator. To assist in the selection, the arbitrator shall provide the parties with a list of both volunteer and paid mediators that have been certified by the division under s. 718.501. If the parties are unable to agree on a mediator within the time allowed by the arbitrator, the arbitrator shall appoint a mediator from the list of certified mediators. If a case is referred to mediation, the parties shall attend a mediation conference, as scheduled by the parties and the mediator. If any party fails to attend a duly noticed mediation conference, without the permission or approval of the arbitrator or mediator, the arbitrator must impose sanctions against the party, including the striking of any pleadings filed, the entry of an order of dismissal or default if appropriate, and the award of costs and attorney fees

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incurred by the other parties. Unless otherwise agreed to by the parties or as provided by order of the arbitrator, a party is deemed to have appeared at a mediation conference by the physical presence of the party or its representative having full authority to settle without further consultation, provided that an association may comply by having one or more representatives present with full authority to negotiate a settlement and recommend that the board of administration ratify and approve such a settlement within 5 days from the date of the mediation conference. The parties shall share equally the expense of mediation, unless they agree otherwise.

- (g) The purpose of mediation as provided for by this section is to present the parties with an opportunity to resolve the underlying dispute in good faith, and with a minimum expenditure of time and resources.
- (h) Mediation proceedings must generally be conducted in accordance with the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure, and these proceedings are privileged and confidential to the same extent as court-ordered mediation. Persons who are not parties to the dispute are not allowed to attend the mediation conference without the consent of all parties, with the exception of counsel for the parties and corporate representatives designated to appear for a party. If the mediator declares an impasse after a mediation conference has been held, the arbitration proceeding terminates, unless all parties agree in writing to continue the arbitration proceeding, in which case the arbitrator's decision shall be binding or nonbinding, as agreed upon by the parties; in the arbitration proceeding, the arbitrator shall not consider any evidence relating to the unsuccessful mediation except in a

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proceeding to impose sanctions for failure to appear at the mediation conference. If the parties do not agree to continue arbitration, the arbitrator shall enter an order of dismissal, and either party may institute a suit in a court of competent jurisdiction. The parties may seek to recover any costs and attorney fees incurred in connection with arbitration and mediation proceedings under this section as part of the costs and fees that may be recovered by the prevailing party in any subsequent litigation.

- (i) Arbitration shall be conducted according to rules adopted by the division. The filing of a petition for arbitration shall toll the applicable statute of limitations.
- (j) At the request of any party to the arbitration, the arbitrator shall issue subpoenas for the attendance of witnesses and the production of books, records, documents, and other evidence and any party on whose behalf a subpoena is issued may apply to the court for orders compelling such attendance and production. Subpoenas shall be served and shall be enforceable in the manner provided by the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure. Discovery may, in the discretion of the arbitrator, be permitted in the manner provided by the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure. Rules adopted by the division may authorize any reasonable sanctions except contempt for a violation of the arbitration procedural rules of the division or for the failure of a party to comply with a reasonable nonfinal order issued by an arbitrator which is not under judicial review.
- (k) The arbitration decision shall be rendered within 30 days after the hearing and presented to the parties in writing. An arbitration decision is final in those disputes in which the

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parties have agreed to be bound. An arbitration decision is also final if a complaint for a trial de novo is not filed in a court of competent jurisdiction in which the condominium is located within 30 days. The right to file for a trial de novo entitles the parties to file a complaint in the appropriate trial court for a judicial resolution of the dispute. The prevailing party in an arbitration proceeding shall be awarded the costs of the arbitration and reasonable attorney fees in an amount determined by the arbitrator. Such an award shall include the costs and reasonable attorney fees incurred in the arbitration proceeding as well as the costs and reasonable attorney fees incurred in preparing for and attending any scheduled mediation. An arbitrator's failure to render a written decision within 30 days after the hearing may result in the cancellation of his or her arbitration certification.

- (1) The party who files a complaint for a trial de novo shall be assessed the other party's arbitration costs, court costs, and other reasonable costs, including attorney fees, investigation expenses, and expenses for expert or other testimony or evidence incurred after the arbitration hearing if the judgment upon the trial de novo is not more favorable than the arbitration decision. If the judgment is more favorable, the party who filed a complaint for trial de novo shall be awarded reasonable court costs and attorney fees.
- (m) Any party to an arbitration proceeding may enforce an arbitration award by filing a petition in a court of competent jurisdiction in which the condominium is located. A petition may not be granted unless the time for appeal by the filing of a complaint for trial de novo has expired. If a complaint for a

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trial de novo has been filed, a petition may not be granted with respect to an arbitration award that has been stayed. If the petition for enforcement is granted, the petitioner shall recover reasonable attorney fees and costs incurred in enforcing the arbitration award. A mediation settlement may also be enforced through the county or circuit court, as applicable, and any costs and fees incurred in the enforcement of a settlement agreement reached at mediation must be awarded to the prevailing party in any enforcement action.

- (5) PRESUIT MEDIATION.—In lieu of the initiation of mandatory nonbinding arbitration set forth in subsections (1)-(4), a party may submit a dispute to presuit mediation in accordance with s. 720.311. Election and recall disputes are not eligible for mediation; such disputes must be arbitrated by the division or filed with a court of competent jurisdiction.
- (6) DISPUTES INVOLVING ELECTION IRREGULARITIES.—Every arbitration petition received by the division and required to be filed under this section challenging the legality of the election of any director of the board of administration must be handled on an expedited basis in the manner provided by the division's rules for recall arbitration disputes.
- (7) (6) APPLICABILITY.—This section does not apply to a nonresidential condominium unless otherwise specifically provided for in the declaration of the nonresidential condominium.
- Section 8. Subsection (1) and paragraph (b) of subsection
- 1100 (3) of section 718.303, Florida Statutes, are amended to read: 1101
 - 718.303 Obligations of owners and occupants; remedies.-
 - (1) Each unit owner, each tenant and other invitee, and

each association is governed by, and must comply with the provisions of, this chapter, the declaration, the documents creating the association, and the association bylaws which are shall be deemed expressly incorporated into any lease of a unit. Actions at law or in equity for damages or for injunctive relief, or both, for failure to comply with these provisions may be brought by the association or by a unit owner against:

- (a) The association.
- (b) A unit owner.
- (c) Directors designated by the developer, for actions taken by them before control of the association is assumed by unit owners other than the developer.
- (d) Any director who willfully and knowingly fails to comply with these provisions.
- (e) Any tenant leasing a unit, and any other invitee occupying a unit.

The prevailing party in any such action or in any action in which the purchaser claims a right of voidability based upon contractual provisions as required in s. 718.503(1)(a) is

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contractual provisions as required in s. 718.503(1)(a) is entitled to recover reasonable attorney attorney's fees. A unit

owner prevailing in an action between the association and the

1125 unit owner under this <u>subsection</u> section, in addition to

1126 recovering his or her reasonable <u>attorney</u> attorney's fees, may

recover additional amounts as determined by the court to be

1128 necessary to reimburse the unit owner for his or her share of

1129 assessments levied by the association to fund its expenses of

1130 the litigation. This relief does not exclude other remedies

1131 provided by law. Actions arising under this subsection are not

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considered may not be deemed to be actions for specific
performance.

- (3) The association may levy reasonable fines for the failure of the owner of the unit or its occupant, licensee, or invitee to comply with any provision of the declaration, the association bylaws, or reasonable rules of the association. A fine may not become a lien against a unit. A fine may be levied by the board on the basis of each day of a continuing violation, with a single notice and opportunity for hearing before a committee as provided in paragraph (b). However, the fine may not exceed \$100 per violation, or \$1,000 in the aggregate.
- (b) A fine or suspension levied by the board of administration may not be imposed unless the board first provides at least 14 days' written notice to the unit owner and, if applicable, any tenant occupant, licensee, or invitee of the unit owner sought to be fined or suspended, and an opportunity for a hearing before a committee of at least three members appointed by the board who are not officers, directors, or employees of the association, or the spouse, parent, child, brother, or sister of an officer, director, or employee. The role of the committee is limited to determining whether to confirm or reject the fine or suspension levied by the board. If the committee does not approve the proposed fine or suspension by majority vote, the fine or suspension may not be imposed. If the proposed fine or suspension is approved by the committee, the fine payment is due 5 days after notice of the approved fine is provided to the unit owner and, if applicable, to any tenant, licensee, or invitee of the unit owner the date of the committee meeting at which the fine is approved. The association must

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provide written notice of such fine or suspension by mail or hand delivery to the unit owner and, if applicable, to any tenant, licensee, or invitee of the unit owner.

Section 9. Section 718.5014, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

718.5014 Ombudsman location.—The ombudsman shall maintain his or her principal office in <u>a Leon County on the premises of the division or, if suitable space cannot be provided there, at another place convenient to the offices of the division which will enable the ombudsman to expeditiously carry out the duties and functions of his or her office. The ombudsman may establish branch offices elsewhere in the state upon the concurrence of the Governor.</u>

Section 10. Subsection (25) of section 719.103, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

719.103 Definitions.—As used in this chapter:

(25) "Unit" means a part of the cooperative property which is subject to exclusive use and possession. A unit may be improvements, land, or land and improvements together, as specified in the cooperative documents. An interest in a unit is an interest in real property.

Section 11. Paragraph (c) of subsection (2) of section 719.104, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

719.104 Cooperatives; access to units; records; financial reports; assessments; purchase of leases.—

- (2) OFFICIAL RECORDS.-
- (c) The official records of the association are open to inspection by any association member or the authorized representative of such member at all reasonable times. The right

1190 to inspect the records includes the right to make or obtain 1191 copies, at the reasonable expense, if any, of the association 1192 member. The association may adopt reasonable rules regarding the 1193 frequency, time, location, notice, and manner of record 1194 inspections and copying, but may not require a member to 1195 demonstrate any purpose or state any reason for the inspection. 1196 The failure of an association to provide the records within 10 1197 working days after receipt of a written request creates a rebuttable presumption that the association willfully failed to 1198 1199 comply with this paragraph. A member unit owner who is denied 1200 access to official records is entitled to the actual damages or 1201 minimum damages for the association's willful failure to comply. 1202 The minimum damages are \$50 per calendar day for up to 10 days, 1203 beginning on the 11th working day after receipt of the written 1204 request. The failure to permit inspection entitles any person 1205 prevailing in an enforcement action to recover reasonable 1206 attorney fees from the person in control of the records who, 1207 directly or indirectly, knowingly denied access to the records. 1208 Any person who knowingly or intentionally defaces or destroys 1209 accounting records that are required by this chapter to be 1210 maintained during the period for which such records are required 1211 to be maintained, or who knowingly or intentionally fails to create or maintain accounting records that are required to be 1212 1213 created or maintained, with the intent of causing harm to the 1214 association or one or more of its members, is personally subject 1215 to a civil penalty under pursuant to s. 719.501(1)(d). The 1216 association shall maintain an adequate number of copies of the 1217 declaration, articles of incorporation, bylaws, and rules, and 1218 all amendments to each of the foregoing, as well as the question

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and answer sheet as described in s. 719.504 and year-end financial information required by the department, on the cooperative property to ensure their availability to members unit owners and prospective purchasers, and may charge its actual costs for preparing and furnishing these documents to those requesting the same. An association shall allow a member or his or her authorized representative to use a portable device, including a smartphone, tablet, portable scanner, or any other technology capable of scanning or taking photographs, to make an electronic copy of the official records in lieu of the association providing the member or his or her authorized representative with a copy of such records. The association may not charge a member or his or her authorized representative for the use of a portable device. Notwithstanding this paragraph, the following records shall not be accessible to members unit owners:

- 1. Any record protected by the lawyer-client privilege as described in s. 90.502 and any record protected by the work-product privilege, including any record prepared by an association attorney or prepared at the attorney's express direction which reflects a mental impression, conclusion, litigation strategy, or legal theory of the attorney or the association, and which was prepared exclusively for civil or criminal litigation or for adversarial administrative proceedings, or which was prepared in anticipation of such litigation or proceedings until the conclusion of the litigation or proceedings.
- 2. Information obtained by an association in connection with the approval of the lease, sale, or other transfer of a

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3. Personnel records of association or management company employees, including, but not limited to, disciplinary, payroll, health, and insurance records. For purposes of this subparagraph, the term "personnel records" does not include written employment agreements with an association employee or management company, or budgetary or financial records that indicate the compensation paid to an association employee.

- 4. Medical records of unit owners.
- 5. Social security numbers, driver license numbers, credit card numbers, e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, facsimile numbers, emergency contact information, addresses of a unit owner other than as provided to fulfill the association's notice requirements, and other personal identifying information of any person, excluding the person's name, unit designation, mailing address, property address, and any address, e-mail address, or facsimile number provided to the association to fulfill the association's notice requirements. Notwithstanding the restrictions in this subparagraph, an association may print and distribute to unit parcel owners a directory containing the name, unit parcel address, and all telephone numbers of each unit parcel owner. However, an owner may exclude his or her telephone numbers from the directory by so requesting in writing to the association. An owner may consent in writing to the disclosure of other contact information described in this subparagraph. The association is not liable for the inadvertent disclosure of information that is protected under this subparagraph if the information is included in an official record of the association and is voluntarily provided by an

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owner and not requested by the association.

- 6. Electronic security measures that are used by the association to safeguard data, including passwords.
- 7. The software and operating system used by the association which allow the manipulation of data, even if the owner owns a copy of the same software used by the association. The data is part of the official records of the association.

Section 12. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 719.106, Florida Statutes, is amended, and subsection (3) is added to that section, to read:

719.106 Bylaws; cooperative ownership.-

- (1) MANDATORY PROVISIONS.—The bylaws or other cooperative documents shall provide for the following, and if they do not, they shall be deemed to include the following:
 - (b) Quorum; voting requirements; proxies.-
- 1. Unless otherwise provided in the bylaws, the percentage of voting interests required to constitute a quorum at a meeting of the members shall be a majority of voting interests, and decisions shall be made by owners of a majority of the voting interests. Unless otherwise provided in this chapter, or in the articles of incorporation, bylaws, or other cooperative documents, and except as provided in subparagraph (d)1., decisions shall be made by owners of a majority of the voting interests represented at a meeting at which a quorum is present.
- 2. Except as specifically otherwise provided herein, after January 1, 1992, unit owners may not vote by general proxy, but may vote by limited proxies substantially conforming to a limited proxy form adopted by the division. Limited proxies and general proxies may be used to establish a quorum. Limited

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proxies shall be used for votes taken to waive or reduce reserves in accordance with subparagraph (j)2., for votes taken to waive the financial reporting requirements of s. 719.104(4)(b), for votes taken to amend the articles of incorporation or bylaws pursuant to this section, and for any other matter for which this chapter requires or permits a vote of the unit owners. Except as provided in paragraph (d), after January 1, 1992, no proxy, limited or general, shall be used in the election of board members. General proxies may be used for other matters for which limited proxies are not required, and may also be used in voting for nonsubstantive changes to items for which a limited proxy is required and given. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, unit owners may vote in person at unit owner meetings. Nothing contained herein shall limit the use of general proxies or require the use of limited proxies or require the use of limited proxies for any agenda item or election at any meeting of a timeshare cooperative.

- 3. Any proxy given shall be effective only for the specific meeting for which originally given and any lawfully adjourned meetings thereof. In no event shall any proxy be valid for a period longer than 90 days after the date of the first meeting for which it was given. Every proxy shall be revocable at any time at the pleasure of the unit owner executing it.
- 4. A member of the board of administration or a committee may submit in writing his or her agreement or disagreement with any action taken at a meeting that the member did not attend. This agreement or disagreement may not be used as a vote for or against the action taken and may not be used for the purposes of creating a quorum.

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5. A board or committee member participating in a meeting via telephone, real-time video conferencing, or similar real-time electronic or video communication counts toward a quorum, and such member may vote as if physically present When some or all of the board or committee members meet by telephone conference, those board or committee members attending by telephone conference may be counted toward obtaining a quorum and may vote by telephone. A telephone speaker must shall be used utilized so that the conversation of such those board or committee members attending by telephone may be heard by the board or committee members attending in person, as well as by any unit owners present at a meeting.

(3) GENERALLY.—The association may extinguish a discriminatory restriction, as defined in s. 712.065(1), pursuant to s. 712.065.

Section 13. Paragraph (1) of subsection (4) of section 720.303, Florida Statutes, is redesignated as paragraph (m), a new paragraph (1) is added to that subsection, and paragraph (c) of subsection (2) and present paragraph (1) of subsection (4) of that section are amended, to read:

720.303 Association powers and duties; meetings of board; official records; budgets; financial reporting; association funds; recalls.—

- (2) BOARD MEETINGS.-
- (c) The bylaws shall provide the following for giving notice to parcel owners and members of all board meetings and, if they do not do so, shall be deemed to include the following:
- 1. Notices of all board meetings must be posted in a conspicuous place in the community at least 48 hours in advance

1364 of a meeting, except in an emergency. In the alternative, if 1365 notice is not posted in a conspicuous place in the community, 1366 notice of each board meeting must be mailed or delivered to each 1367 member at least 7 days before the meeting, except in an 1368 emergency. Notwithstanding this general notice requirement, for 1369 communities with more than 100 members, the association bylaws 1370 may provide for a reasonable alternative to posting or mailing 1371 of notice for each board meeting, including publication of notice, provision of a schedule of board meetings, or the 1372 1373 conspicuous posting and repeated broadcasting of the notice on a 1374 closed-circuit cable television system serving the homeowners' 1375 association. However, if broadcast notice is used in lieu of a 1376 notice posted physically in the community, the notice must be 1377 broadcast at least four times every broadcast hour of each day 1378 that a posted notice is otherwise required. When broadcast 1379 notice is provided, the notice and agenda must be broadcast in a 1380 manner and for a sufficient continuous length of time so as to 1381 allow an average reader to observe the notice and read and 1382 comprehend the entire content of the notice and the agenda. In 1383 addition to any of the authorized means of providing notice of a 1384 meeting of the board, the association may adopt, by rule, a 1385 procedure for conspicuously posting the meeting notice and the 1386 agenda on the association's website for at least the minimum 1387 period of time for which a notice of a meeting is also required 1388 to be physically posted on the association property. Any such 1389 rule must require the association to send to members whose e-1390 mail addresses are included in the association's official 1391 records an electronic notice in the same manner as is required 1392 for a notice of a meeting of the members. Such notice must

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include a hyperlink to the website where the notice is posted. The association may provide notice by electronic transmission in a manner authorized by law for meetings of the board of directors, committee meetings requiring notice under this section, and annual and special meetings of the members to any member who has provided a facsimile number or e-mail address to the association to be used for such purposes; however, a member must consent in writing to receiving notice by electronic transmission.

- 2. An assessment may not be levied at a board meeting unless the notice of the meeting includes a statement that assessments will be considered and the nature of the assessments. Written notice of any meeting at which special assessments will be considered or at which amendments to rules regarding parcel use will be considered must be mailed, delivered, or electronically transmitted to the members and parcel owners and posted conspicuously on the property or broadcast on closed-circuit cable television not less than 14 days before the meeting.
- 3. Directors may not vote by proxy or by secret ballot at board meetings, except that secret ballots may be used in the election of officers. This subsection also applies to the meetings of any committee or other similar body, when a final decision will be made regarding the expenditure of association funds, and to any body vested with the power to approve or disapprove architectural decisions with respect to a specific parcel of residential property owned by a member of the community.
 - (4) OFFICIAL RECORDS.—The association shall maintain each

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of the following items, when applicable, which constitute the official records of the association:

- (1) Ballots, sign-in sheets, voting proxies, and all other papers and electronic records relating to voting by parcel owners, which must be maintained for at least 1 year after the date of the election, vote, or meeting.
- $\underline{\text{(m)}}$ (1) All other written records of the association not specifically included in <u>this subsection</u> the foregoing which are related to the operation of the association.

Section 14. Subsections (1) and (2) of section 720.305, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

720.305 Obligations of members; remedies at law or in equity; levy of fines and suspension of use rights.—

- (1) Each member and the member's tenants, guests, and invitees, and each association, are governed by, and must comply with, this chapter and, the governing documents of the community, and the rules of the association. Actions at law or in equity, or both, to redress alleged failure or refusal to comply with these provisions may be brought by the association or by any member against:
 - (a) The association;
 - (b) A member;
- (c) Any director or officer of an association who willfully and knowingly fails to comply with these provisions; and
- (d) Any tenants, guests, or invitees occupying a parcel or using the common areas.

The prevailing party in any such litigation is entitled to recover reasonable attorney fees and costs. A member prevailing

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in an action between the association and the member under this section, in addition to recovering his or her reasonable attorney fees, may recover additional amounts as determined by the court to be necessary to reimburse the member for his or her share of assessments levied by the association to fund its expenses of the litigation. This relief does not exclude other remedies provided by law. This section does not deprive any person of any other available right or remedy.

- (2) An The association may levy reasonable fines. A fine may not exceed \$100 per violation against any member or any member's tenant, guest, or invitee for the failure of the owner of the parcel or its occupant, licensee, or invitee to comply with any provision of the declaration, the association bylaws, or reasonable rules of the association unless otherwise provided in the governing documents. A fine may be levied by the board for each day of a continuing violation, with a single notice and opportunity for hearing, except that the fine may not exceed \$1,000 in the aggregate unless otherwise provided in the governing documents. A fine of less than \$1,000 may not become a lien against a parcel. In any action to recover a fine, the prevailing party is entitled to reasonable attorney fees and costs from the nonprevailing party as determined by the court.
- (a) An association may suspend, for a reasonable period of time, the right of a member, or a member's tenant, guest, or invitee, to use common areas and facilities for the failure of the owner of the parcel or its occupant, licensee, or invitee to comply with any provision of the declaration, the association bylaws, or reasonable rules of the association. This paragraph does not apply to that portion of common areas used to provide

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access or utility services to the parcel. A suspension may not prohibit an owner or tenant of a parcel from having vehicular and pedestrian ingress to and egress from the parcel, including, but not limited to, the right to park.

(b) A fine or suspension levied by the board of administration may not be imposed unless the board first provides at least 14 days' notice to the parcel owner and, if applicable, any occupant, licensee, or invitee of the parcel owner, sought to be fined or suspended and an opportunity for a hearing before a committee of at least three members appointed by the board who are not officers, directors, or employees of the association, or the spouse, parent, child, brother, or sister of an officer, director, or employee. If the committee, by majority vote, does not approve a proposed fine or suspension, the proposed fine or suspension may not be imposed. The role of the committee is limited to determining whether to confirm or reject the fine or suspension levied by the board. If the proposed fine or suspension levied by the board is approved by the committee, the fine payment is due 5 days after notice of the approved fine is provided to the parcel owner and, if applicable, to any occupant, licensee, or invitee of the parcel owner the date of the committee meeting at which the fine is approved. The association must provide written notice of such fine or suspension by mail or hand delivery to the parcel owner and, if applicable, to any occupant tenant, licensee, or invitee of the parcel owner.

Section 15. Paragraph (g) of subsection (1) of section 720.306, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

720.306 Meetings of members; voting and election

1509 procedures; amendments.—

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- (1) QUORUM; AMENDMENTS.-
- (g) A notice required under this section must be mailed or delivered to the address identified as the parcel owner's mailing address in the official records of the association as required under s. 720.303(4) on the property appraiser's website for the county in which the parcel is located, or electronically transmitted in a manner authorized by the association if the parcel owner has consented, in writing, to receive notice by electronic transmission.

Section 16. Subsection (6) is added to section 720.3075, Florida Statutes, to read:

720.3075 Prohibited clauses in association documents.-

(6) The association may extinguish a discriminatory restriction, as defined in s. 712.065(1), pursuant to s. 712.065.

Section 17. This act shall take effect July 1, 2020.

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