



## Florida Sheriffs Association Position on Pretrial Service Agencies

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Pretrial Service Agencies were created to assist judges in determining the risk an offender may pose if released into the community before trial, so that they can make informed decisions that protect the public. Florida's Constitution guarantees that **every person has a right to pretrial release**, unless he is charged with a capital crime.

Pretrial Service Agencies also provide supervision services to some of those who are released, such as drug and alcohol testing, placement of electronic monitors/GPS devices to track offender whereabouts and keep them away from victims, enforce curfews, and ensure they show up for court.

- Pretrial service agencies allow the courts, counties and Sheriffs to release defendants prior to trial at a **cost significantly less** than housing them in jail facilities.
- Determining someone's eligibility for pretrial release based solely on their access to cash does not take into account a person's risk to the community.

The Florida Sheriffs Association opposes any legislation that increases the amount of time that pretrial defendants unnecessarily remain in county jails as this results in significant costs to taxpayers. Increasing the time pretrial defendants remain in custody will have a fiscal impact by holding people in jail who could instead be supervised in the community with better outcomes. Fiscal estimates exceed \$48,500,000 statewide for county budgets. If these estimates include the cost that would be needed to build additional **jail space in order to accommodate more people** for longer periods of time, forecasts would grow to \$168,500,000.

Florida's Sheriffs oppose laws that would make it more difficult for people to qualify for pretrial release programs, such as mental health and drug courts and community supervision – meaning there will be more inmates in jail.

Counties should maintain the right to enact ordinances that suit the public safety needs of their communities. Pretrial supervision programs do just that - they allow for judges, the courts, counties and Sheriffs to use a safer process to determine which people can be released prior to trial as to not endanger the community. These local officials have also agreed upon the standards that will ensure the defendant's appearance in court.

**The Florida Sheriffs Association wants increased public safety for pretrial defendants while controlling jail costs and therefore opposes increasing the length of time pretrial defendants are in custody unnecessarily.**

