Support Increased Recovery of Stolen Goods

Currently Florida statutes delineate requirements for pawnshop brokers (ch. 539), secondhand dealers (ch. 538, Part I), secondary metals recyclers (ch. 538, Part II), and mail-in secondhand precious metals dealers (ch. 538, Part III). Each of these occupations has different licensing and registration provisions, including varying specifications on how goods should be handled and held to ensure they are not stolen. The Florida Sheriffs Association supports legislation to take the best practices from these statutes that greatly assist in recovering stolen property and apply them in a consistent manner.

Specifically, statutes related to secondhand dealers and pawnbrokers contain conflicting time frames in which goods must be held and whether photographs of the goods must be taken. These provisions can significantly aid law enforcement in recovering stolen items and returning them to victims.

This legislation now requires secondhand dealers to:

- Take digital photos within 24 hours after acquiring any secondhand goods.
- Hold precious metals, gemstones, jewelry, antique furnishings, fixtures, or decorative items, or items of art for 30 calendar days after the goods were acquired. During this timeframe a secondhand dealer may not sell, barter, exchange, alter, adulterate, use, or dispose of the goods.

In addition, the legislation creates a $2,500 noncriminal fine for any secondhand dealer who does not conform with requirements when an owner or lienor provides proof of possession of an item before filing a replevin action.

This legislation reflects changes to the secondhand dealer statute, which are identical to requirements found in the pawnbroker statute. With these changes, law enforcement will have a better chance of identifying goods and will be more effective in recovering and returning stolen items to victims.

Support HB 739 by Representative Passidomo &
SB 948 by Senator Richter