

Broward Politics

Ron Book says he has no conflict with Broward on bail bond issue

By Brittany Wallman March 4, 2011 08:00 AM

One of the top issues for Florida's counties this year is fighting a bill that bail bondsmen support. The bill is about the use of release programs to let suspects out of jail. Counties love it. But this bill would hamper it a bit, saying only the indigent could be released that way.

The Florida Association of Counties says fighting this bill is one of its top priorities this year. Broward Commissioner Ilene Lieberman is president of this group.



Lobbyist Ron Book has represented bail bondsmen for years and years. He also represents Broward County as one of the county's paid lobbyists in Tallahassee, and Broward opposes the bill in question. But Book said Thursday that despite how that might look, he does not have a conflict of interest. ([Click here to read about the other conflict issue that commissioners said Book had.](#))

Book said he represents a statewide bail bond association called Bail Florida. He said there is a second statewide bail bond association, and it's the one that's active on this issue.

"My client has not engaged us to engage on the bill," he said Thursday. "So we're not involved in the bill. ... I do not have a conflict at this time."

Broward Mayor Sue Gunzburger said Broward greatly prefers pre-trial release of suspects because it's cheaper than paying for suspects to sit in jails if they can't afford to post bond.

The bill in question (SB 372) is sponsored by Broward's state Sen. Ellyn Bogdanoff, R-Fort Lauderdale. [Read the bill here so you can see](#) the criteria it sets for pre-trial release, including that the person must be indigent.