

# Sheriff's office says legislature's cost saving move will cost Florida taxpayers \$7 million

## Lawmakers try to change pre-trial release rules

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TAMPA - A cost-cutting move by the Florida legislature, to eliminate a pre-trial release program, could cost Florida taxpayers \$7 million, a Hillsborough County jail official said.

Hillsborough jail commander Jim Previterra says HB 1379 is designed to change regulations for pre-trial release.

The jail frequently releases low-risk detainees on house arrest, making them wear an ankle monitor.

It's a cost-saving measure when a person is arrested on minor charges (trespassing, shoplifting, traffic offenses, etc.) and cannot afford bond.

Keeping an inmate in jail costs taxpayers \$100.06 a day. The ankle monitor program is \$6.70 a day.

Rep. Jamie Grant (R) Tampa voted for the plan to eliminate pre-trial release unless a detainee can prove he is indigent.

"I voted for HB 1379 because I do not believe in burdening our taxpayers with the costs of drug testing and electronic(ally) monitoring those who are charged of a crime and are not indigent," wrote Grant in an e-mail.

Previtera says if the law is passed, it will actually cost taxpayers money--- \$700,000 a year in Hillsborough County and \$7 million statewide.

The jailer believes lawmakers are changing the pre-trial release law at the request of bail bondsman, who stand to make a profit if more detainees are forced to make bail.

"To have the state legislature put their nose into how we operate the pre-trial program, clearly at the direction and bequest of a small fraction of the bond industry, is despicable," said Previterra.

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