

Item # 31(2)

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

Public Hearing

FEBRUARY 6, 2018

SUBMITTED BY

COMMISSIONER DALE V.C.

HOLNESS



Scott Greenberg
Executive Director
LGBTQ Freedom Fund
Tel: 786.233.8969
Email: scott@lgbtqfund.org
www.lgbtqfund.org

TESTIMONY

February 1, 2018

To: Board of County Commissioners

From: Scott Greenberg, Executive Director

Subject: Adult Civil Citation Program

My name is Scott Greenberg, and I am Executive Director of the LGBTQ Freedom Fund and Florida Freedom Fund, two projects of the Freedom Fund Network, a 501(c)(3) non-profit housed in Broward County. Our organization addresses the harms of mass incarceration in the U.S., with particular focus on the long-overlooked, disproportionate impacts of incarceration on the LGBTQ community. Sexual minorities are three times more likely to be incarcerated than heterosexual individuals and 10 to 20 times more likely to be sexually assaulted in confinement.

It is the position of the Freedom Fund Network that adult civil citation programs afford significant humanitarian and financial advantages to communities. By expanding the opportunities in which law enforcement officers may, at their discretion, issue a civil citation for nonviolent acts, officers are given an additional tool to preempt the incarceration of those who pose no threat to public safety.

To curb the harm of pretrial detention, the Freedom Fund Network posts bail to secure the safety and liberty of low- or no-income people in jail and immigration detention held solely because they cannot post bond. In the U.S. pretrial system, those with means are released from confinement while those in poverty, often accused of the same or lesser crimes, face only injurious choices: languish at risk, or accept a guilty plea to get out of jail—often to crimes they didn't commit. Incarcerated, even for a day, an individual risks losing employment, custody of children, housing, and more fundamentally, control of one's own body, and over nine in 10 defendants who cannot make bail will accept a plea bargain, guaranteeing a criminal record.

Incarceration diverts tax dollars from critical county functions—public safety, education, health services, employment programs, etc. It costs nearly \$220 a day to detain an individual in Broward County, and one out of every four county tax dollars in Broward County, as of 2012, funds the jail system. As the Sun Sentinel reported last year, “Taxpayers in South Florida are spending millions of dollars every year to jail people accused of crimes as petty as panhandling and public drinking. A homeless man arrested for sleeping on Fort Lauderdale’s public beach spent 42 days in the Broward County Jail — at a cost of about \$5,880 to the county — because he could not afford a \$25 bond, court records show. He ended up being charged a \$50 court fine.”



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Unnecessary detention is a county-, state- and nation-wide issue. Florida has a higher incarceration rate than any *country* in the world, including the U.S., which incarcerates more people than any other nation. In 2015, more than eight out of 10 of Florida's total arrests (777,037) were for non-violent offenses. This mass incarceration of human bodies has wrought endless hardship on our community. It is imperative we roll it back.

Thank you, and please feel free to reach me at scott@lgbtqfund.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Scott Greenberg
Executive Director
LGBTQ Freedom Fund