



Florida House of Representatives



Florida Senate

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**Rep. Mark Pafford and Sen. Margolis
File Public Safety Legislation**

TALLAHASSEE, FL – To promote public safety and improve public health, State Representative Mark Pafford (D-West Palm Beach) and State Senator Gwen Margolis (D-Miami) have filed legislation that would create a syringe exchange program to reduce the risk of acquiring or transmitting blood-borne infections.

House Bill 735 and Senate Bill 808, Needle and Syringe Exchange Program, would create a syringe exchange program, now forbidden by Florida law. The goal of the program is to reduce the spread of blood-borne infections such as HIV and hepatitis B and C. The program also will save money, minimize the risk of needlestick injuries to law enforcement officers, and help chemically dependent individuals attain drug treatment help. Dozens of studies have demonstrated that syringe exchange programs help prevent infection by reducing the re-use and circulation of injecting equipment without increasing drug use or resulting in other negative consequences.

“This program effectively reduces the spread of harmful diseases and will ultimately benefit the health of many Floridians,” said Senator Margolis.

Rep. Mark Pafford said, “There are eight times the number of used syringes on the streets of Miami compared to San Francisco, a city which operates four needle exchange programs. Syringe exchange programs are a vital bridge to treatment and prevention services and promote public safety.”

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