

**For immediate release**

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## **Representative Sean Shaw Files Legislation Promoting Prison Diversion Programs**

**Tallahassee, FL** – Representative Sean Shaw (D-Tampa) has filed [\*HB 641\*](#) to promote prison diversion programs for non-violent offenders and allow courts to depart from mandatory minimum sentencing requirements in certain situations. If enacted, the bill would make meaningful changes to Florida’s sentencing laws by allowing people who are convicted of simple possession of a controlled substance or a nonviolent second degree felony to be eligible for non-state prison sanctions.

The bill allows for courts to depart from mandatory minimums for nonviolent felonies and misdemeanors under specific criteria and would re-establish the Sentencing Commission to provide recommendations for offense severity level rankings of noncapital felonies.

“Providing options for diversion and treatment programs instead of incarceration is a commonsense measure that will increase public safety while saving the state money,” emphasized **Representative Sean Shaw**. “Instead of punishing non-violent drug offenders for their addiction, we should look for ways that we can help them get the treatment they need to get better. Rather than continuing to send people to over-populated prisons for non-violent offenses, we should be looking for ways to help them become productive members of society.”

*HB 641* would also restore circumstances for reducing sentences based on substance abuse or addiction and amenability to treatment and creates new mitigating circumstances for certain nonviolent felons.

The bill requires diversion through drug court, residential drug treatment, or drug offender probation.

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