

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Judiciary Committee

BILL: SB 186

INTRODUCER: Senators Ring and Bogdanoff

SUBJECT: Misdemeanor Pretrial Substance Abuse Programs

DATE: October 17, 2011 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Cellon	Cannon	CJ	Fav/1 amendment
2.	Maclure	Maclure	JU	Pre-meeting
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

Please see Section VIII. for Additional Information:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| A. COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Statement of Substantial Changes |
| B. AMENDMENTS..... | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Technical amendments were recommended |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Amendments were recommended |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Significant amendments were recommended |

I. Summary:

The bill expands the pool of people who are eligible for admission into a misdemeanor pretrial substance abuse education and treatment intervention program. It does so by making the following changes to current law:

- Removing the requirement that a person not have previously been admitted to a pretrial program in order to participate in a misdemeanor pretrial substance abuse education and treatment intervention program.
- Eliminating the current restriction that only a person charged with misdemeanor drug or paraphernalia possession under ch. 893, F.S., may participate in a program. The bill retains that offense as an eligible category for participation, but it also adds that a person may participate if he or she is charged with a misdemeanor for:
 - A nonviolent, nontraffic-related offense and it is shown that the person has a substance abuse problem;
 - Prostitution;
 - Underage possession of alcohol; or
 - Possession of certain controlled substances without a valid prescription.

This bill substantially amends section 948.16, Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Misdemeanor Pretrial Substance Abuse Education and Treatment Intervention

Misdemeanor possession of controlled substances under ch. 893, F.S., is the possession of 20 or fewer grams of cannabis.¹ Possession of drug paraphernalia for the purposes set forth in s. 893.147, F.S., is also a misdemeanor offense. The specified purposes include such things as possessing the paraphernalia in order to harvest or manufacture a controlled substance.²

Section 948.16, F.S., specifies that a person who is charged with a misdemeanor for possession of a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia under ch. 893, F.S., and who has not previously been convicted of a felony nor been admitted to a pretrial program, is eligible for voluntary admission into a misdemeanor pretrial substance abuse education and treatment intervention program, including a treatment-based drug court program, for a period based on the program requirements and the treatment plan for the offender.

Admission may be based upon motion of either party or the court except, if the state attorney believes the facts and circumstances of the case suggest the defendant is involved in dealing and selling controlled substances, the court shall hold a preadmission hearing. If the state attorney establishes, by a preponderance of the evidence at such hearing, that the defendant was involved in dealing or selling controlled substances, the court shall deny the defendant's admission into the pretrial intervention program.³

Participants in the program are subject to a coordinated strategy developed by a drug court team under s. 397.334(4), F.S., which may include a protocol of sanctions that may be imposed upon the participant for noncompliance with program rules. The protocol of sanctions may include, but is not limited to, placement in a substance abuse treatment program offered by a licensed service provider or in a jail-based treatment program or serving a period of incarceration within the time limits established for contempt of court.⁴

At the end of the pretrial intervention period, the court must:

- Consider the recommendation of the treatment program;
- Consider the recommendation of the state attorney as to disposition of the pending charges; and
- Determine, by written finding, whether the defendant successfully completed the pretrial intervention program.

If the court finds that the defendant has not successfully completed the pretrial intervention program, the court may order the person to continue in education and treatment or return the

¹ Section 893.13(6)(b), F.S. The offense is a misdemeanor of the first degree. *Id.*

² Section 893.147(1), F.S. The offense is a misdemeanor of the first degree. *Id.*

³ Section 948.16(1)(a), F.S.

⁴ Section 948.16(1)(b), F.S.

charges to the criminal docket for prosecution. The court shall dismiss the charges upon finding that the defendant has successfully completed the pretrial intervention program.⁵

Pretrial Diversion Programs in General

Research indicates that pretrial diversion programs, such as the misdemeanor pretrial substance abuse education and treatment intervention program, have proven to be effective alternatives to traditional case proceedings. A study conducted by the National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies⁶ found that, although data on recidivism rates for these programs was sparse, the available data indicated low rates (between 1 percent and 12 percent depending on the type of crime) of recidivism for offenders that complete pre-trial diversion programs.⁷ The low rate of recidivism for offenders in these programs may be due to the nature of the programs. The Pretrial Justice Institute⁸ states that pretrial diversion programs “operate under the theory that if the underlying problems are addressed the individual is less likely to recidivate. This, in turn, will lead to less crime and less future costs to the criminal justice system.”⁹ Since their beginnings in the 1960’s, pretrial diversion programs have been continually expanded. In an article published by the National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies, the author states:

In 1972, ... fund [from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration of the U.S. Department of Justice] led to the start-up of the Metropolitan Dade County Pretrial Intervention Project, in Miami, FL. The consistent record of accomplishment of Dade County Pretrial Intervention from that time forward led not only to the proliferation of diversion programs in the State of Florida – far in excess of the number anywhere else in the south – but to the adoption of a state diversion statute and to state-level standards and goals for diversion promulgated by a governor’s crime commission.¹⁰

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Under current law only a person who has been charged with a misdemeanor for possession of a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia under ch. 893, F.S., and who has not previously been convicted of a felony nor been admitted to a pretrial program, is eligible for voluntary admission into a misdemeanor pretrial substance abuse education and treatment intervention program.

⁵ Section 948.16(2), F.S.

⁶ Incorporated in 1973 as a not-for-profit corporation, the National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies (NAPSA) is the national professional association for the pretrial release and pretrial diversion fields. More information can be found at <http://www.napsa.org/mission.htm> (last visited Oct. 13, 2011).

⁷ Spurgeon Kennedy et al. *Promising Practices in Pretrial Diversion*, 16, available at <http://www.pretrial.org/Docs/Documents/PromisingPracticeFinal.pdf> (last visited Oct. 13, 2011).

⁸ In 1976 the U.S. Department of Justice funded the Pretrial Justice Institute at the request of NAPSA, and it is the nation’s only not-for-profit organization dedicated to ensuring informed pretrial decision-making for safe communities. More information can be found at <http://www.pretrial.org/AboutPJI/Pages/default.aspx> (last visited Oct. 13, 2011).

⁹ John Clark, Pretrial Justice Institute, *The Role of Traditional Pretrial Diversion in the Age of Specialty Treatment Courts: Expanding the Range of Problem-Solving Options at the Pretrial Stage*, 7 (October 2007), available at <http://www.pretrial.org/Reports/PJI%20Reports/Forms/DispForm.aspx?ID=25> (last visited Oct. 13, 2011).

¹⁰ John P. Bellassai, *A Short History of the Pretrial Diversion of Adult Defendants from Traditional Criminal Justice Processing Part One: The Early Years*, 5, available at <http://www.napsa.org/publications/diversionhistory.pdf> (last visited Oct. 13, 2011).

The bill expands the pool of people who are eligible for admission into a misdemeanor pretrial substance abuse education and treatment intervention program. It does so by removing the condition that, in order to participate in the substance abuse education and treatment intervention program, a person must not have been previously admitted to a pretrial program.

Additionally, the bill expands the pool of potential participants in the pretrial program to include persons who are charged with misdemeanor prostitution or underage possession of alcohol. Prostitution is defined by s. 796.07, F.S. The first violation is a second-degree misdemeanor, and a second offense is punishable as a first-degree misdemeanor.¹¹ Possession of alcohol by a person under the age of 21 is prohibited by s. 562.111, F.S. The first offense is punishable as a second-degree misdemeanor while the second offense is a first-degree misdemeanor.¹² The bill also provides that persons who are charged with misdemeanor possession of certain controlled substances without a valid prescription may be admitted to the program.¹³

Finally, the bill provides that a person charged with a nonviolent, nontraffic-related misdemeanor offense¹⁴ who is identified as having a substance abuse problem also is eligible for admission into a misdemeanor pretrial substance abuse education and treatment intervention program.

As noted above, in order to participate in a program currently, a person charged with a misdemeanor for possession of a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia must not have previously been convicted of a felony. The bill expands the list of persons eligible for admission into such programs to include, among others, persons charged with nonviolent, nontraffic-related misdemeanors who have an identified substance abuse problem. However, as drafted, the bill may be unclear as to whether these latter persons are eligible to participate in the pretrial program if they have been previously convicted of a felony. The Legislature may wish to clarify whether the condition of not having previously been convicted of a felony applies across the board to any program participant.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2012.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

This bill appears to be exempt from the requirements of article VII, section 18 of the Florida Constitution because it involves a criminal law.

¹¹ Section 796.07(4), F.S.

¹² Section 562.111(1), F.S.

¹³ The bill cites s. 499.03, F.S., which punishes as a second-degree misdemeanor the possession of “any habit-forming, toxic, harmful, or new drug subject to s. 499.003(33), or prescription drug as defined in s. 499.003(43), unless the possession of the drug has been obtained by a valid prescription.” These drugs include “new drugs” (s. 499.003(33), F.S.), prescription drugs (s. 499.003(43), F.S.), medicinal drugs (s. 465.003(8), F.S.), misbranded drugs (s. 499.007(13), F.S.), compressed medical gas (s. 499.003(11), F.S.), prescription medical oxygen (s. 499.003(46), F.S.), and veterinary prescription drugs (s. 499.003(53), F.S.).

¹⁴ These offenses would include certain trespass, theft, criminal-mischief, and worthless-check offenses to name a few.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The number of potential participants in county-funded misdemeanor pretrial substance abuse education and treatment intervention programs could increase under the bill. Although no potential fiscal impact has been brought to the attention of professional staff of the committee, it is conceivable that the counties may decide to increase program capacity, which would result in increased expenditures. To the extent that persons who successfully complete programs have their criminal charges dismissed and are not sentenced to time in local jails, local governments may see positive fiscal effects.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

For the sake of continuity, it is suggested that line 24 of the bill reference s. 562.111, F.S., which governs underage possession of alcohol. The other specific offenses addressed in the bill include statutory citations.

On line 26, the bill cites s. 499.03(2) or (3), F.S., for possession of a controlled substance without a valid prescription. The offense, however, is prescribed in s. 499.03(1), F.S.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

Barcode 821248 by Criminal Justice on October 4, 2011:

Cites the statute number for possession of alcohol while under 21 years of age (s. 562.111, F.S.) for continuity with the other specific offenses addressed in the bill, which include statutory citations. This amendment addresses one of the issues raised in the “Technical Deficiencies” section of this bill analysis.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill’s introducer or the Florida Senate.
