

Pawn Regulations Amendment Proposal

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Introduction

My name is Mary M. Wanser. I am a Manatee County resident, a member of the local Victims Rights Council, and a proud Florida resident of nine years. I have a vested interest in this community as a President's List graduate of Manatee Community College and a current Dean's List and dual-Honor Society student of the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee.

Concerned about a deficiency in our state's current pawnbroking regulations, I am appealing to you for support of a bill that would ease law enforcement officials' arduous task of recovering stolen property that is pawned or sold to brokerage houses throughout Florida. Not only will my proposed amendments ease tasks for law enforcement, but will make it simpler for pawnbrokers to carry out their business and to maintain accurate records of transactions. Most importantly, my proposed amendments may save lives.

Current Codes

The 2009 Florida State Statutes Title XXXIII Chapter 539.001(8)(b)2. in sub-subparagraphs a.-i. lists information about pledged goods that a pawnbroker is required to obtain (see Appendix A). The bill that I am proposing adds a sub-subparagraph j. to require a digital image of each pledged or sold good accepted from a pledgor or seller by a pawnbroker.

The 2009 Florida State Statutes Title XXXIII Chapter 539.001(8)(b)3. requires particular identification information be obtained by the pawnbroker of the pledgor or seller (see Appendix A). I propose to add to that list a digital image of the pledgor or seller of goods also be required.

Proposal Clearly Defined

In short, I propose that Florida pawnbrokers be required to procure digital images of pawned or sold goods as well as digital images of the pledgors or sellers of those goods (see Appendix A). The images shall be uploaded at the close of each business day to a statewide central database accessible to law enforcement officials. Note that there are already numerous information sharing systems in place throughout the state, but pawnbrokers are not currently obliged by Florida law to submit images or identifying facts to these systems.

Benefits of the Proposed Amendments

A Google map search reveals approximately 8,191 registered pawnshops in the state of Florida. Currently, investigators in the Property Recovery Units of County Sheriff Departments throughout the state have no convenient, centralized digital image system to which they can refer when attempting to reclaim stolen property. The officers often must revert to visiting on foot hundreds of local shops in order to make a definite match based on written descriptions. With a central tracking system of images, a few computer searches of prominent defining characteristics of the stolen pieces would produce an image collection. A visual scan of the images would immediately narrow the potential location of the stolen items for further investigation.

With my proposed amendments, a “hit” on the stolen property obtained from a database would also include a digital image of the seller or pledgor of the item(s). The search is drastically narrowed without any off-site footwork, the perpetrator is quickly identified, and the investigation is appropriately advanced.