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Featured News

Florida's HB 407: Stopping Guardianship & Probate Fraud Before It's Too Late

By Billie Tucker Volpe | February 21, 2025



Imagine working your whole life, carefully saving and planning for your loved ones, only to have your assets disappear into the hands of corrupt guardians, attorneys, and yes... judges too. This isn't just a hypothetical scenario—it's happening right now in Florida.

Millions of dollars have vanished from special needs trusts, stolen by those entrusted to protect the most vulnerable.

Families have watched helplessly as probate attorneys gambled away their inheritance.

Real estate, meant for grieving families, has been sold for pennies on the dollar to insiders such as corrupt judges or close friends of the guardian instead of being appraised fairly. This isn't just an injustice—it's criminal and those involved should be prosecuted and thrown in jail for elder abuse!

That's why **HB 407 – Guardianship of Property**, introduced by Rep. Mike Caruso, is so critical. This bill would increase transparency, strengthen oversight, and ensure that families are no longer left in the dark while their loved ones' assets are mismanaged—or outright stolen.

Why HB 407 Matters

- **Quarterly Accounting Reports:** Currently, guardians and probate managers only file annual reports—if they file at all. HB 407 **requires quarterly reports** so beneficiaries can see what's happening in real-time instead of discovering financial mismanagement years too late.
- **Transparency for Families:** Families of wards will **automatically receive copies** of these financial reports, helping them ensure their loved one's assets are being handled responsibly.
- **Certified Appraisals for Probate Assets:** No more sweetheart deals where a judge's friends or insiders buy up homes for pennies on the dollar. HB 407 requires **certified appraisals** so probate assets are valued fairly.
- **Criminal Referrals for Missing Money:** If funds go missing, the courts **must refer the case to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE)** for investigation, stopping fraudsters before they can move on to their next victim.

This Is Not Just Theory—This Is Happening Now!

- Over \$100 million is missing from special needs trusts, prompting an **FBI investigation**. Many victims were elderly, disabled, or unable to fight back. [Read more here.](#)
- A **Polk County probate attorney stole \$1.7 million** from a client's deceased father's estate—then gambled it all away at the Hard Rock Casino. [Read more here.](#)

We have a list of other families who have been stolen from and their loved ones have been abused through this system. How many more families have suffered in silence, watching their loved ones' estates be pillaged by a corrupt system with little accountability?

The State of Florida is better than this and these shameful acts must stop – now!

The Urgent Next Step: A Senate Sponsor

The critical challenge now is securing a **Senate sponsor** for HB 407. Without a senator to carry the bill forward, these much-needed protections could die before ever becoming law.

Locally Senator **Clay Yarborough** would be an excellent choice, given his past efforts on trust reform—he has already filed a trust bill this session. His leadership could make the difference in getting HB 407 through the Senate and ultimately passed into law.

With the deadline for submitting bills to drafting in the Senate quickly approaching, time is of the essence. This is a rare opportunity to fix a broken system and protect Florida families from financial predators.

If you have a connection with Senator Yarborough – reach out to him and ask for his help on this crucial piece of legislation.



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