

17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA
BROWARD COUNTY COURTHOUSE
201 S.E. 6TH STREET, SUITE 20170
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33301



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For Immediate Release

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CHANGES TO BROWARD'S FIRST APPEARANCE COURT

Fort Lauderdale, FL – Effective September 3, 2019, monetary cash bond requirements for misdemeanor charges shall be disfavored in the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit's First Appearance Court. An individual's entitlement to pretrial release shall not be tied to their financial ability to post a monetary bond. Instead, in most cases, release on their own recognizance shall be favored.

This collaborative effort will ensure persons with the financial ability to post a bond and those without the financial ability to post a bond are treated equally. Supporting these changes are Chief Judge Jack Tuter, Sheriff Gregory Tony, State Attorney Michael Satz and Public Defender Howard Finkelstein.

The changes are as follows:

(1) ***Release On Own Recognizance.*** *It is a routine occurrence that persons charged with misdemeanor crimes cannot afford the bond associated with such charge because of financial constraints or hardship. Under Florida law, individuals charged with certain offenses, including misdemeanor crimes, are entitled to pretrial release on reasonable conditions. An individual's entitlement to reasonable pretrial release conditions shall not be tied to their financial ability to post a monetary bond.*

*As such, when considering pretrial release for all cases where an individual is arrested for and/or charged with a misdemeanor crime, excluding misdemeanor crimes for or involving driving under the influence, stalking, violation of a court order, indecent exposure (excluding urination), battery, domestic violence, or animal cruelty, **monetary release conditions shall be disfavored and the presumption shall be in favor of release on non-monetary release conditions, including release on the defendant's own recognizance.** This presumption, already recognized under Florida Law, does not limit the authority of the First Appearance Judge to consider all relevant and legal factors in determining pretrial release, including those set forth in section 903.046, Florida Statutes and Florida Rule of Criminal Procedure 3.131.*

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