

From: [Arellano, Joey](#)
To: [Press](#)
Subject: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Legislators Help Prisoners Reintegrate after Release
Date: Wednesday, October 13, 2021 1:39:19 PM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 13, 2021

CONTACT

Thomas J. Valeo
Office of Representative Matt Willhite
561-603-3274
Thomas.Valeo@myfloridahouse.gov

Legislators Help Prisoners Reintegrate after Release

Tallahassee, Fla. – State **Representative Matt Willhite (D-Wellington)** files legislation, [HB 279](#), ensuring that money services businesses cannot charge fees to an inmate released from prison looking to cash the gate money they receive upon their release. **Senator Bobby Powell (D-West Palm Beach)** joins this effort with [SB 464](#). Gate money refers to an amount of money given to eligible inmates upon release from prison. Most states provide money to people leaving prison as a way to help get them back on their feet. However, from state to state, the amount of funds provided and the source of the funds differs.

"The amount of money these discharged inmates receive is not enough to help them meet their basic needs," stated **Representative Willhite**. "Released inmates receive their gate money in the form of a check. If they do not have a bank account, where do they go to cash their check? They have to go to a money services business, in which case they are paying a fee to get their money. This bill removes a barrier to those who have done their time and are working to reintegrate back into society."

"The purpose of gate money is to ensure the state of Florida is providing returning citizens with the most opportunities possible to succeed after serving their time. Their fresh start should not be further obstructed by service fees. Our hope is that this bill alleviates that hindrance and starts a meaningful dialogue about how we can best serve returning citizens who will then in turn serve and contribute to our state and local community," said **Senator Powell**.

###