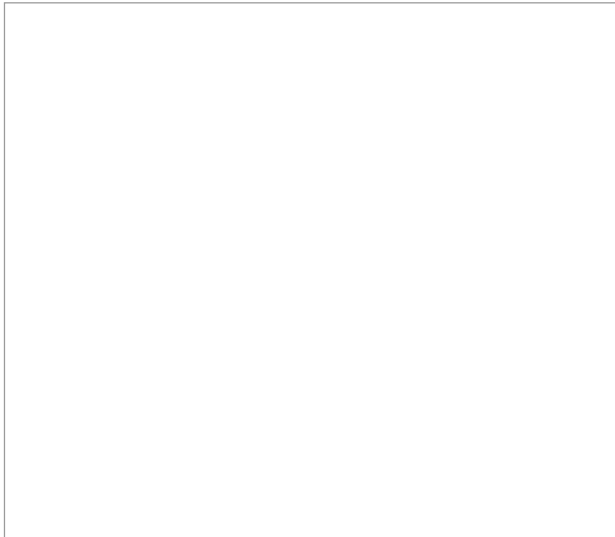


Juveniles and GPS



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JACKSONVILLE, Fla. -- GPS technology has made tracking crooks as easy as looking at a computer screen. It can pinpoint a suspect's exact location in real time. Now, one South Florida lawmaker wants to expand a program to cover kids who commit crimes.

Instead of sending non-violent juvenile offenders to jail, they would be outfitted with a GPS tracking bracelet. The kids would be tracked down, rather than locked up. It's an idea Rob Mason, Director of the Juvenile Court Unit in Jacksonville, says he can get behind, with a few minor changes.

He said, "We certainly would support it being used instead of a child being incarcerated in a secure detention facility. We would not support it if any child on any charge would be subject to GPS monitoring."

Mason says he likes the bill because it could save the state a lot of money. It's cheaper to track a juvenile, than to incarcerate them. But he says the bill is unclear how long a teen could be tracked and how the program would be paid for.

"It's actually competing for money with Teen Court, which is an aversion program that is very successful," he said.

Supporters of the bill say not all child offenders need to be locked

up. They say not all of them are a threat to public safety, and that tracking they're every move is punishment enough.

Mason it's a good idea, that needs some work. "It's a little bit disturbing to think the government always knows where somebody may or may not be. But if somebody's in secure detention, we know where they are."

The bill was presented to the Florida Legislature in late October, and is still a long way from becoming law.

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