



As our county's senior population continues to rise, there will be a corresponding increase in guardianship cases that is predicted to be about 15 percent, or 400 cases, per year. The amount of assets that are controlled by guardians this year is approximately \$4 billion statewide and \$500 million in Palm Beach County alone.

I am committed to ensuring our most vulnerable citizens are not victims of financial predators.

Since 2011, our Guardianship Fraud Program has identified over \$5.1 million worth of unsubstantiated disbursements, missing assets, and fraud making it one of the nation's leading agencies in guardianship audits and investigations.

Because of this success, it became my mission to strengthen guardianship laws in Florida and across the country. These efforts led to the passing of several state bills that have now positioned Florida Clerks to audit and investigate fraud or financial exploitation in guardianship cases statewide in collaboration with the Department of Elderly Affairs' Office of Public and Professional Guardianship.

I am also very proud and humbled to have been recently honored at the 4<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Adult Guardianship in Germany for our successful guardianship fraud program. We were the only program in the U.S. to have been recognized. Earlier this year, I was invited to speak before the Nevada Supreme Court about our guardianship fraud program. They are using our program as a best practice as they review and study their current processes and rules on the administration of guardianships.

Although we have many accomplishments, there is still a lot of work to be done. I challenge all citizens to continue to advocate and to keep the focus on this imperative issue.

Anyone who suspects a court-appointed guardian is misusing a ward's finances can call our confidential hotline at 561.355.FRAUD. Reports also can be made via email to [fraud@mypalmbeachclerk.com](mailto:fraud@mypalmbeachclerk.com) or entered online at [www.mypalmbeachclerk.com/fraud](http://www.mypalmbeachclerk.com/fraud).

Best regards,

Sharon R. Bock, Esq.  
Clerk & Comptroller, Palm Beach County

*The Florida Constitution established the independent office of the Clerk & Comptroller as a public trustee, responsible for safeguarding public records and public funds. Clerk Sharon Bock is directly elected by and accountable to Palm Beach County residents. She serves as your Clerk of the Circuit Court, County Recorder, Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners, Chief Financial Officer, Treasurer and Auditor for Palm Beach County.*