

NEWS SERVICE FLORIDA



JUSTICE 2 JESUS' BRIAN PITTS JAILED

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THE NEWS SERVICE OF FLORIDA

THE CAPITAL, TALLAHASSEE, March 12, 2010....Justice 2 Jesus lobbyist Brian Pitts was jailed Friday in Pinellas County to begin serving a five month sentence for practicing law without a license.

Pasco-Pinellas Circuit Judge Chris Helinger ordered Pitts locked up for repeatedly violating a 2003 order by the Florida Supreme Court, which sentenced him last month.

Pitts has requested a rehearing before the high court. But under terms of their ruling, justices said Pitts was subject to jailing within five days of being served the court order, which occurred last week at the Capitol.

"Unless a miracle happens, it looks like they got away with locking him up," said Calvester Anderson, Pitts' associate with Justice 2 Jesus, a self-styled advocacy organization.

Even after the court's order, Pitts, maintained his steady presence at the Capitol, testifying before legislative committees through Thursday. Although Pitts isn't registered as a lobbyist, he is arguably among the Capitol's most visible figures during the legislative session.

In the Supreme Court's 2003 order, Pitts was barred from appearing in any Florida court on behalf of a client or from giving legal advice. He also was prohibited from using a power of attorney in an attempt to represent a client in legal matters.

In ordering Pitts jailed, the court ruled that he prepared legal summonses in 2004 for two clients while also attempting to represent a client before the St. Petersburg Community Affairs Department in a human relations complaint.

For more than three years, Pitts has wrangled with the Supreme Court over the latest accusations, pleading not guilty, demanding a jury trial and filing motions seeking various delays.

While Pitts may be gone from the legislative session, he remains a part of legislation. Sen. Gary Siplin, D-Orlando, has filed a measure (SB 58) aimed at compensating Pitts for his long battle with the Florida Bar.

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3/12/2010

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