

Lawmakers Want To Keep Affordable Housing Funds For Just That

By KATE PAYNE • NOVEMBER 14, 2017

Florida lawmakers want to stop their colleagues from spending money meant for affordable housing on other projects. The move comes after Hurricane Irma battered and destroyed Floridians' homes.



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For years, the Legislature has been dipping into the [Sadowski Housing Trust Fund](#). The money is meant to help with down payments and to incentivize affordable development. Instead lawmakers are sweeping hundreds of millions of dollars into general revenue, to make up for budget shortfalls. Republican Senator Kathleen Passidomo of Naples wants to stop that.

"We're going to have to become smarter in how we craft our budget. There's a lot of things that we have funded that may not necessarily need to be funded,"

Passidomo said. "But this is a trust, a public trust. And it's incumbent on us to use those funds for the purposes that they're intended."

Democratic Representative Sean Shaw of Tampa says the practice is fueling a self-inflicted crisis.

"Nearly one million very low income households in Florida pay more than half their income on housing. Half of their income goes to housing! That tells you the tremendous need we have for affordable housing," Shaw said.

Shaw is sponsoring a bill that would make sure the funds go to affordable housing programs. He says Floridians' needs are growing as thousands of Puerto Ricans move to the state to escape the aftermath of this year's hurricanes.