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Legal aid funds at risk over immigration challenge

Gray Rohrer
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

Gov. Ron DeSantis’ former top lawyer is raising questions about an immigrants’ advocacy group that’s suing the state over its immigration enforcement law. And one end result could be that the group loses a pot of money it gets to serve low-income clients. Joe Jacquot, who was DeSantis’ first



Jacquot

general counsel in 2019–20, is a board member of Funding Florida Legal Aid (FFLA), the group that administers grants to legal aid organizations. He’s now a shareholder in the Gunster law firm. In May he sent an email to FFLA executive director Donny MacKenzie, highlighting groups that received funding from FFLA and that were involved in the

lawsuit against the state. FFLA’s rules prohibit groups receiving grants from suing the state. Jacquot raised concerns about a host “of pure policy/political organizations suing the State of Florida” that receive legal aid money, “which raises a concern on our objective standards,” he wrote. The USA TODAY NETWORK–Florida Capital Bureau obtained the emails between Jacquot and MacKenzie, as well as MacKenzie’s letters to legal aid groups,

through a public records request. State bar foundations or other entities collect interest from lawyers’ pooled trust accounts and use it to fund legal aid services and access-to-justice initiatives for low-income individuals. Clients can include hurricane victims, children in foster care, as well as veterans, the elderly and disabled folks seeking to obtain benefits.

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Shawn Meuse, 48, a shark fisher with nearly two decades of experience, says he expects to make a full recovery after an Aug. 16 shark attack on Cayo Costa. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY SHAWN MEUSE

Shark bite victim expresses gratitude

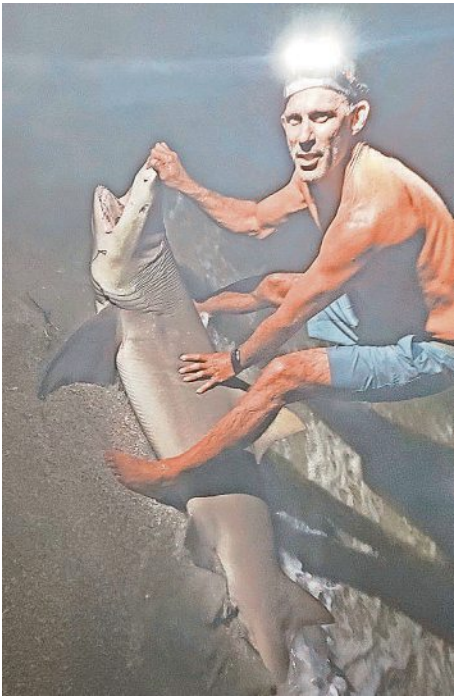
Cape fisher expecting to undergo 2nd surgery

Tomas Rodriguez
Naples Daily News
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

A Cape Coral man bitten by a lemon shark while he tried to release it during a birthday gathering said the incident will not change his perspective on fishing. Shawn Meuse, 48, an experienced shark fisher with nearly two decades of experience, continued to recover at Gulf Coast Medical Center, in Fort Myers, on Aug. 20. He underwent his first surgery this week and anticipates at least one more. Two 911 calls alerted authorities of the shark bite off Cayo Costa. “We caught a lemon shark ... We just took the hook out,” Meuse explained.

“We’re getting ready to release him back in the water, and he turned around and bit me.” Meuse, who has been shark-fishing since 2008, said he went out with eight friends ahead of his birthday. The lemon shark that attacked Meuse was the first predator the group caught that night. According to Meuse, he and his friends arrived around 6 p.m. Aug. 16 and spent about five hours by the water until the attack. “We put the tourniquet on at 11:02 [p.m.],” Meuse explained, later adding that his first surgery was Aug. 19, on his birthday. “Now I’m just waiting for them to give me antibiotics to kill all the bacteria, germs that sharks carry ... whatever is in the water, whatever is in the sand ...” As Meuse faces his second surgery,

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WeatherTiger
Ryan Truchelut
Guest columnist

After Erin exits, here’s what’s next for Florida

The 2010s were an emotional decade. Even the birds were angry. Yet between the cold-pressed juices and hot sauce podcasts, one key tropical ingredient was missing: major hurricane landfalls on the U.S. East Coast. In fact, while hurricane seasons since 2006 have seen historically high U.S. landfall activity, all 10 Category 3, 4 or 5 landfalls have occurred between Texas and the Florida Keys. Compare this to a similarly busy period between 1945 and 1964, in which five Gulf Coast major hurricanes were accompanied by a whopping eight from South Florida to New England. Reels and ‘Toks to the contrary, Hurricane Erin did not snap the East Coast’s 21-year lucky streak following 2004’s Hurricane Jeanne. And it’s a good thing it didn’t, because Erin is an absolute monster.

Erin will bring a thunderous surf and low-end tropical storm force winds to mid-Atlantic Coast

After riding a top 5 all-time rate of 24-hour rapid intensification to Category 5 intensity over the weekend, Erin has survived eyewall replacement cycles and bouts with wind shear to become one of the larger hurricanes in recent years. While Erin’s maximum sustained winds as of Wednesday evening are just shy of Category 3 strength, hurricane-force sustained winds span a diameter of 150 miles, with tropical storm-force winds over 450 miles wide. Erin’s strongest winds have been located by hurricane hunters in a broad eastern eyewall wrapped around a smaller core, giving the storm the coiled appearance on visible satellite imagery of the world’s largest and most energetic Cinnabon. That tender, flaky spiral covers much of the space between Bermuda and North Carolina’s Outer Banks. Erin’s center is taking a path down the middle of that passage, as its northward track bends northeast and accelerates through early Friday. That will limit Erin’s onshore wind impacts to low-end tropical storm-force wind gusts along the mid-Atlantic

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