



Florida Police Benevolent Association, Inc.



CAPITOL REPORT

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By Matt Puckett, Deputy Executive Director
LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY FOR THE WEEK ENDING APRIL 11, 2008

THE HEADLINES SAY IT ALL...

excerpts from two major newspapers paint a grim picture.

Deepest Cuts in Government Services for Decades

By LLOYD DUNKELBERGER
H-T CAPITAL BUREAU
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TALLAHASSEE — As House and Senate leaders begin negotiating a new state budget, one thing is clear: Floridians will see the deepest cuts in government services in decades.

On Thursday, the House voted 72-41 for a \$65.1 billion budget -- which is \$5 billion less than the current year. The Senate on Wednesday approved a \$65.9 billion budget for the budget year that begins July 1.

Both chambers have resisted tax increases of any sort to make up for billions of dollars in reduced revenue caused by the state's real estate downturn...

State House budget slashes social programs

By GARY FINEOUT and MARY ELLEN KLAS

Herald Tallahassee Bureau

Florida's House on Thursday approved a budget that cuts healthcare programs for the poor, slashes the number of prosecutors and shuts a state-run hospital for tuberculosis patients in Lantana.

But while pushing cuts, lawmakers have also found room to pay for pet projects, like spending up to \$700,000 for a feasibility study on extending a rail corridor from South Bay to West Miami that could wind up helping the sugar industry.

House Republicans have also put in \$12 million intended to "attract a targeted high-wage industry" to a controversial new airport in Panama City, whose creation was pushed by Florida's largest private land owner, the St. Joe Company.

The House approved its budget along party lines, as Democrats portrayed Republicans as heartless for refusing to dig more deeply into reserves, hike Florida's cigarette tax or end sales-tax exemptions now enjoyed on such things as bottled water and charter fishing trips...

Little else needs to be said about the situation in Tallahassee.

HOUSE PROPOSAL TO RAISE SALARIES FOR ALL STATE OFFICERS

On Wednesday, the **House Safety & Security Council** unveiled the long awaited salary proposal for **all State Law Enforcement, Correctional and Correctional Probation Officers. SSC 13 by Representative Will Snyder** attempts to provide supplemental salary increases to every officer employed with the state by diverting a portion of a fee charged to probationers. Currently, a \$2.00 surcharge for equipment is added to the fees a probationer pays as a condition of probation with the receipts of this surcharge being deposited into a trust fund administered by the Department of Corrections. The proposal would siphon off a portion of that fee into the **Criminal Justice Standards & Training Trust Fund** for the exclusive purpose of providing supplemental salary enhancements to all state officers.



Statewide Chapter Presidents fill the House Safety & Security Council meeting.

This legislation is the product of hard work by a number of parties. Most importantly, **the Speaker of the House of Representatives Marco Rubio and his staff**, along with staff from the **Policy & Budget Council** and **Safety & Security Council** have been extremely instrumental in crafting this legislation. Many of you may remember when the PBA's statewide chapter presidents met with Speaker Rubio back in March to discuss all the options for a pay increase this year. He specifically provided us with a framework for raising revenue that did not increase taxes or fees. The PBA and the chapter presidents rightfully sensed this was our only chance to get a pay increase of some kind for all of our state employed members; therefore, our lobbyists began meetings with the speaker's staff over the course of the last few weeks to discuss any existing fees that could be used and a trust fund to deposit the funds. **SSC 13 (now HB 7121)** is the initial product, yet it remains a work in progress. Obviously, we need to secure more funding sources, not to mention we must get our friends in the Senate to join with the House in moving this legislation forward. For now, it keeps everyone in play for a pay increase of some kind.

A special thanks to one of law enforcements true champions **Representative Will Snyder**, whose son is currently a state law enforcement officer, for stepping up to plate once again on our behalf. **PBA Lobbyist Gary Bradford**, along with **Presidents from each statewide chapter**, offered testimony and support for this legislation

SENATE AND HOUSE BUDGETS CUT DEEP INTO DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Despite an amendment attempt to stop the cuts to Correctional and Correctional Probation Officers by the **Florida PBA, Senate Democrats led by Senator Steven Geller and one Republican, Senator Steve Oelrich**, the House and Senate budgets were approved this week with the cuts intact. The next step in the process is the appointment of conference committee members to work on the budget differences between the two chambers. Conference is where the rubber meets the road. If these cuts remain in the appropriations bill after conference is complete... officers will be laid off.



Senator Steven Geller on Senate Floor.

The Florida PBA is hosting a rally at the Capitol this **Tuesday, April 15th** for Correctional and Correctional Probation Officers to voice their opposition to these cuts. We hope that Legislators will see just how irresponsible and reckless this proposal is to officer safety and the general public at large. In our opinion, nothing will help drive the message home better than officers in mass descending on the Capitol.

This rally is probably the most important event of the session for our members employed with the Department of Corrections. If you are unable to attend please show your opposition to the cuts by calling, or emailing your local legislators. Thank you for all the support.

Call PBA's *Legislative Connection* to voice concern to your legislators about this issue. Please call Toll-Free 1-800-733-3722, and when you hear the PBA welcome message; dial extension 1-2-3 for instructions on how to get in touch with your legislators.

FHP FUNDING LEGISLATION CONTINUES TO MOVE IN BOTH CHAMBERS

The funding bills for the Florida Highway Patrol continue to move through the process following a bye-week of sorts. **HB 831 by Representative Marcelo Llorente** cruised through the **Economic Expansion & Infrastructure Council** on Tuesday, receiving unanimous approval and lots of support from all the usual suspects. On Thursday, the **Senate Finance & Taxation Committee** quickly passed **SB 920 by Senator Mike Fasano** to complete the week of activity.

Without going into any detail, there are still some bumps in the road for this legislation, but that is true for anything in this process. The PBA's **FHP Chapter** leadership is doing an excellent job with this issue so no one should start to panic, or allow their emotions to get the better of them. Please heed this advice; do not make an enemy of someone who can kill your legislation with the push of a button.

STOP THE “MURDER OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS”

SB 1064 by Senator Paula Dockery passed through its final committee stop on Thursday and is now on the Senate Calendar for Second Reading. The **Senate Criminal and Civil Justice Appropriations Committee** unanimously approved the legislation, which will make it a mandatory life sentence for anyone who even attempts to kill a law enforcement officer. **HB 321 by Representative Will Snyder** was approved by the House of Representatives last week and is in Senate Messages where it is figuratively awaiting **SB 1064** to be heard on the Senate floor. We anticipate final passage will occur next week.

PBA LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR 2008

- Equitable pay increases for state correctional, correctional probation, and law enforcement officers represented by Florida PBA, including but not limited to, pay compression and retention issues.
- Legislation extending the period of DROP participation for Law Enforcement, Correctional and Correctional Probation Officers, at the rank of Captain and below, an additional 36 months (**Representative Julio Robaina HB 501 and Senator Carey Baker – SB 706**)
- Legislation including Institutional Security Specialist to the definition of Certified Correctional Officer. (**Representative Pat Patterson – HB 427 and Senator Ted Deutch – SB 924**)
- Legislation allowing for purchase of Special Risk credit for certain academy time. (**Representative Anitere Flores – HB 379 and Senator Mike Fasano – SB 106**)
- Legislation changing the Special Risk upgraded credit from two percent to three percent. (**Representative Ed Hooper – HB 397 and Senator Mike Fasano – SB 294**)
- Support for the Officer Malcolm Thompson Act. (**Representative Frank Attkisson – HB 57 and Senator Steve Oelrich – SB 1024**)
- Support for legislation to place security cameras in certain late night business parking lots (**Representative Ari Porth HB 325/HB 327 and Senator Jeff Atwater SB 2770/SB 2774**)
- Support for legislation to require life sentences for murder or attempted murder of a law enforcement officer. (**Representative Will Snyder – HB 321 and Senator Paula Dockery - SB 1064**)

With reference to other legislation, the Board of Directors gives authorization to the Director of Legislative Services to support legislation favorable to the membership or oppose legislation harmful to the membership.



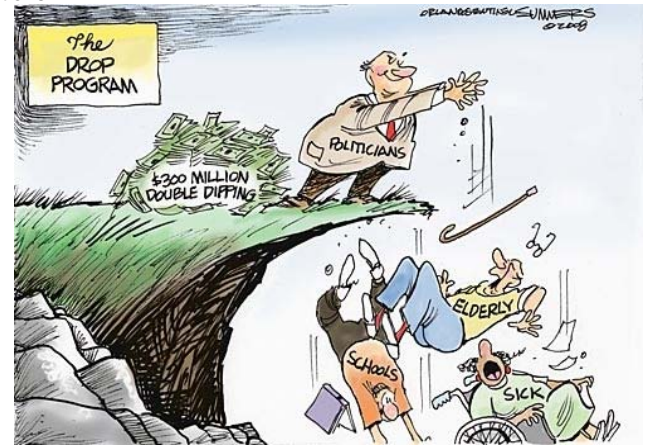
Senator Steven Geller (center) discussing further strategies with PBA Lobbyists following his amendment attempt on Wednesday.



Senator Steve Oelrich (center) was lobbied to oppose the cuts in the appropriations by members of the Correctional Probation Officers Chapter. He voted to restore the Correctional and Correctional Probation Officers positions.



Representative Will Snyder discussing the next step for his pay plan bill with statewide chapter presidents and members.



A little humor...



From right to left: PBA Presidents Telly Sands (FDLE Special Agents) and Jim Baiardi (SCO Chapter) lobby Representative Michael Grant to increase salaries for state employed officers.



SLEO Chapter President Matt Tyre offers testimony in support of pay increases for all state law enforcement, correctional and correctional probation officers.