



James
"Jim"
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A Message From the President of the SCO Chapter

State Correctional Officers Dodge Bullet In Special Session!

State correctional officers were spared layoffs as other department employees were being told they were losing their jobs during the January 2009 Special Session. During the special session, I visited every State Senator's office and most of the House Members telling them a simple message: "Correctional officers' backs have been put up against a wall due to past budget cuts. We can stand no more cuts. We need more staffing/funding—not less."

I testified to the same during House Committee meetings saying that cuts to correctional officer positions will mean more deaths of correctional officers this year. I also did a press release from inside the Capitol calling for more staffing and talking about the violent attack on an officer at Baker CI that took place while the Legislature was meeting concerning cutting jobs of correctional officers. Most of the interviews made statewide news. It appears that my efforts and those of the PBA leadership and lobbyists were successful.

The State Correctional Officers Chapter of the PBA, along with the Florida PBA, were the only organizations

talking/fighting against the budget cuts for correctional officers positions. Where were those other groups who love to run their mouths so much?

The PBA and I will continue to fight to protect your job, benefits, and retirement. But we will need your help and support. I would like to thank the correctional officers who made calls to their elected leaders at my request. This was done in targeted areas for key elected leaders. More calls may be needed this upcoming session. Please take the time to call your elected leaders, especially when requested to do so by the PBA. There is strength in numbers and at times we must make our voices heard in Tallahassee for what we are: professional, hardworking, and the most unappreciated law enforcement officers in the state.

In closing, I ask you all to pray for the hundreds of thousands hard working Americans losing their jobs across the nation.

Stay safe and I look forward to seeing you at the Rally in Tallahassee on March 10, 2009. ●



Cynthia
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Career Issues From American Police Beat

Foot Pursuit Restrictions

There's a new foot pursuit policy in the Austin Police Department. From now on, officers in that agency will have to ask themselves a long list of questions before chasing criminal suspects by foot

According to a report in the *Austin American Statesmen* by Tony Plohetski, Austin police officers must evaluate the immediate danger, consider whether a suspect is known and can be arrested later, and ask themselves what would be gained from pursuing the suspect before beginning foot chases.

The change in policy resulted in part from an incident last year where an Austin sergeant was fired after it was determined that he acted inappropriately when he shot and killed a suspect during a foot pursuit.

According to the policy, officers must gauge the risk to themselves, fellow officers, suspects and bystanders.

The two-page document says that officers should consider whether a suspect may be armed and the availability of backup officers, and requires them to radio a description of the suspect and location of the chase to dispatchers.

That's quite a lot to ask a police officer to think about when he or she has to make a split-second decision.

The new policy also says officers should consider ending a chase if the suspects' identities are known, and if they are not thought to be an immediate threat.

"The purpose of this policy is to facilitate the safe apprehension of a suspect who flees on foot to reduce the risk of injury to the officer, suspect and public," the policy reads.

The tragic situation where Officer Amy Donovan was killed when she was struck by her partner (who was driving their patrol car while Donovan chased a fleeing drug suspect on foot) in East Austin last year also contributed to the chief's belief that a change in the foot pursuit policy was needed.

Assistant Police Chief David Carter, who is the department's chief of staff, and Chief Acevedo initially began changes to the policy soon after taking over the department last year.

"Anytime that you have something where you have a tactical consideration, where somebody, either a police officer or suspect, could be injured, the department needs to establish some kind of training and policy on the matter," Carter told the *Statesman*.

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Florida PBA Sponsor of Florida Women's Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and Reception

The Florida Commission on the Status of Women welcomed the Florida Police Benevolent Association as a sponsor for the 2008/2009 Induction Ceremony and Reception of the Florida Women's Hall of Fame. **Governor Charlie Crist** will induct **Louise H. Courtelis**, **Senator Gwen Margolis** and **Betty Sembler** into the Florida Women's Hall of Fame on Tuesday, March 17, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. in the Capitol Courtyard in Tallahassee. This event honors women, who, through their contributions and experiences have made significant impact not only upon the lives of women but also all citizens of Florida. You can learn more about the Florida Women's Hall of Fame from our website, www.fcswnet.net. ●