

From Your Deputy Executive Director



*Matt
Puckett*

Ready or not, here it comes...

The official start to the Florida Legislature's 2007 Annual Session will begin Tuesday, March 6th and run until Friday, May 4th. As always, we have lined up our key sponsors to the PBA's Legislative Agenda and we continue to meet with legislators prior to the start of session to win support for our issues. We cordially extend an invitation to everyone to visit us and help out during the 60 day session. Please contact us for more information on how to help.

Here's the agenda:

- 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. The Florida PBA leadership has met with **Governor Charlie Crist**, **Senate President Ken Pruitt**, and **House Speaker Marco Rubio** to discuss the pay raise issues. We anticipate a wage proposal within the governor's budget recommendation and of course we are lobbying to have a wage appropriation included in the final legislative budget agreement between the House and Senate.



Senator Mike Haridopolos (center) meets with PBA SLEO Chapter President Matt Tyre (2nd from right) and other SLEO Chapter officers.

- Legislation strengthening penalties for violations of the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights during internal affairs investigations (**Representative Nick Thompson** HB TBA and **Senator Mike Haridopolos** SB 690). This legislation is a repeat from last year's proposal. We were very close to passing this issue, but came up just short in the final days. We intend to move forward with the same language from last year and take our chances on a successful passage this year.

The legislation will require that an officer under investigation and the investigator conducting the investigation tell the truth in both statements and reports while adhering to the Law Enforcement and Correctional Officers' Bill of Rights through the course of the investigation.

- Legislation relating to the State Law Enforcement Officers bargaining unit (**Representative Bob Allen** HB 73 and **Senator Mike Fasano** SB 128). This legislation will allow State Law Enforcement Officers within an agency consisting of 1,200 or more officers to create a separate bargaining unit from the current State Law Enforcement Officers bargaining unit.

- Legislation allowing for purchase of Special Risk credit for certain academy time (**Representative Mike Davis** HB 81 and **Senator Mike Fasano** SB 130). Let's hope this is the year for this issue. This legislation will allow officers, who attended a certified training academy during July 1, 1978 to June 30, 1984 and did not receive the required special risk credit for that time, the option to purchase upgraded special risk credit to cover the training time period.

- Legislation changing the Special Risk upgraded credit from two percent to three percent (**Representative Ed Hooper** HB 91 and **Senator Jeff Atwater** SB 626). Currently,

when an officer purchases a special risk accrual rate credit upgrade for past service the accrual credit is capped at 2% instead 3%. This legislation will change the statute to reflect the 3% accrual rate for special risk service. We are working with the Florida Professional Firefighters on this legislation.

- Legislation limiting an employer from reemploying a retiree to his or her previous position (**Representative Pat Patterson** and **Senator Bill Posey**). This idea seems to be gaining steam as we move forward with it. Basically, we are trying to break the cycle of the revolving door and sweet heart deals in certain FRS employment. This year's version is different from last year's in that it becomes system wide and creates a one year waiting period from retirement to reemployment with the same FRS employer. It does not, however, prevent a retiree from being reemployed in accordance with the law with a different FRS employer than he or she retired from.



Senator Bill Posey signs up as a co-sponsor for SB 128 with PBA Executive Director David Murrell (left), and (standing) FHP Chapter's Troop E Director Timothy Brown, Senior Vice President Dennis Hobbs and President William "Bill" Smith, Jr.

- Support of legislation increasing the subsidy paid to Florida Retirement System retirees (**Representative Bob Allen** HB 87 and **Senator Al Lawson** SB 8). Here's another issue we hope receives final approval. This legislation will increase the subsidy paid to a retiree by two dollars per year of service. Currently, a retiree receives \$5 per year service for a maximum of \$150 per month in retirement to be used for health insurance. This increase will raise the amount to \$7 per year of service for a new maximum of \$210 per month.

Example: \$7 x 30 years of service = \$210 subsidy per month in retirement.

The legislation is being supported by a coalition of labor organizations, retirees and concerned citizens. The Florida PBA, the Florida Professional Firefighters, the Florida Association of State Troopers and the FOP are part of the coalition.

- Support of legislation changing the FRS Average Final Compensation (AFC) from the best five years to the best three years. Bill sponsors to be announced. It is of course supported by every public safety labor organization in the state.

Again, we thank each of you for your continued support. 🍀



Senator Al Lawson (center) with SCO Chapter President Jim Baiardi and PBA Deputy Executive Director Matt Puckett at Governor Crist's Inauguration.

“Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it.”

~ Lou Holtz