

(L-R): SLEO Chapter's Secretary/Treasurer Michael Douglas, President Matt Tyre, and Vice President Chris Kirkland, along with FHP Chapter Troop L Director Christopher Gatewood discuss SB 626 with Senator Jeff Atwater.

We worked closely with our friends at the Florida Professional Firefighters on this legislation.

We appreciate the efforts put forth by **Representative Hooper** and **Senator Atwater**, but in the current fiscal climate an issue with this type of costs attached is a tough sell to the budget crowd.



Legislation limiting an employer from reemploying a retiree to his or her previous position for one year (Representative Pat Patterson – HB 861 and Senator Bill Posey – SB 1948). Well, at least the House liked it.

This idea continues to gain steam. Simply put, we are trying to break the cycle of the “Revolving Door of Retirement” in FRS employment. *Writer's note: Representative Patterson's Legislative Aide Mike Scudiero has coined the term “Revolving Door of Retirement” and does expect royalties for its usage.* This year's version was markedly 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.

(L-R): Florida PBA's Lobbyist Ed Hoffman, Treasurer Ernie George, Representative Pat Patterson, SCO Chapter President Jim Baiardi, Florida PBA Executive Director David Murrell, and SCO Chapter Senior Vice President Danny Witt after House passage of HB 861.



Since this was clearly the most controversial issue we had during the session, a more detailed explanation of the events behind this bill is in order.

As issues go, the beginning stages of **HB 861** seemed tame. There was literally no opposition at single committee hearing in the House of Representatives, but once it hit the House floor on third reading things changed. Suddenly a heated debate broke out as a number of legislators rose in opposition to the idea on behalf of school administrators (who apparently woke up one morning near session's end and realized session was going on) and other mostly high level employees. Yet in the end, only 20 house members voted “NO” to the final passage of **HB 861**, which means it passed with a super majority. Still the bill was then sent to Senate Messages (controversy surrounded it in the Senate from the start), which we jokingly refer to as limbo. There it lived out the remainder of its days.

We have found a real bulldog in **Representative Pat Patterson** on this issue. Thanks for all the hard work!

Senator Bill Posey receives clarification on SB 1948 from Florida PBA Lobbyist Ed Hoffman.



Senator Bill Posey's version **SB 1948** got hung up in the rules and committee process of the **Senate** until two weeks before the session ended. This basically left us with an uphill battle of removing the bill from two committees in about five days. The odds of getting multiple committee withdrawals on a controversial issue are not generally in your favor to begin with, so despite our pressure... it did not budge.

We do appreciate **Senator Posey's** continued effort on this issue. He's always there for us.

Support of legislation increasing the subsidy paid to Florida Retirement System retirees (Representative Bob Allen - HB 87 and Senator Al Lawson - SB 8). No Money!

The \$80 MILLION price tag doomed this legislation. It would have increased the subsidy paid to a retiree by two dollars per year of service. Currently, a retiree will receive \$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 25 years of service = \$175 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.



Senator Al Lawson (center) meets with SCO Chapter Officers and members and family.

Workers' Compensation for First Responders (Representative Sandy Adams – HB 45 and Senator JD Alexander – SB 746). Finally.

The real story behind this legislation is one of determination. **Representative Sandy Adams**, the Florida Professional Firefighters and **Senator JD Alexander** never gave up on this issue. Representative Adams has had the more difficult task with a couple of adversaries within her legislative ranks. She seemed quite relieved after it finally passed the House of Representatives.

The legislation addresses several serious issues related to Workers' Compensation claims for first responders. Three specific issues are loosening the compensability standard of proof caused by occupational disease or toxic exposure. As it stands, a first responder would have to pinpoint the exact location he or she came into contact with a toxic substance, requiring a clear and convincing standard of evidence for a mental or nervous injury. However, the injury does not have to be accompanied by a physical injury in order for a medical payment and permitting first responders employed by municipalities not participating in social security to receive permanent total disability compensation after age 62.

Congratulations to Representative Adams, Senator Alexander and the Florida Professional Firefighters. The Florida PBA and Florida State FOP were also supporters of this legislation.



Senator JD Alexander (center) with the State Law Enforcement Officers Chapter at the Senate.



Representative Sandy Adams (center) with representatives of Florida Professional Firefighters, Florida State FOP, and PBA Deputy Executive Director Matt Puckett (far left) after final passage of the Legislation.