



*Matt Puckett*

# A Message From Your Deputy Executive Director

## Legislative Recap

Obviously, frustration is an appropriate label to attach to the mental state of our membership after the Legislative session we all just endured. Shock and confusion were predominant emotions in the early stages of the session. Something along the lines of "I'm shocked that the Legislature is actually considering taking away my retiree Health Insurance Subsidy." Many expressed confusion that Legislators who had previously been considered our friends or at the very least solid supporters would later file bills incorporating our worst fears about pension and health insurance benefits. Of course, those initial emotions led way to anger.

The anger was properly channeled into action like the massive number of phone calls and emails you all unloaded on PBA's D-Day, which applied tremendous pressure on the Legislative Leadership. As the pressure mounted, many of the bad legislative proposals like reducing the pension multipliers, cutting out overtime from the average final compensation, requiring an employee contribution (however nominal), switching from Defined Benefit Pensions to Defined Contribution Plans, eliminating the Health Insurance Subsidy (HB 5701), and reducing state employee salaries by 3% were shelved.

Except one – the reduction of the compounded interest rate from 6.5% to 3% for FRS DROP accounts (HB 5607). This last minute little gem was placed into the budget conference report with no real chance for us to mount a successful lobbying effort against it... at least during the waning days of the Legislative session. More on that in a moment.

Here's a quick summary of how this DROP proposal made it into the budget in the first place.

The Legislature is required to pass a budget. Since the two chambers (House and Senate) never initially agree to a budget, they conduct a series of budget conference meetings to formulate a final budget conference report which becomes the General Appropriations Act. The *DROP Interest Rate Reduction Proposal* DIRRP (name patent pending... not really) happened during one of the last meetings between the two appropriations chairmen (**Representative David Rivera** and **Senator JD Alexander**). Senator Alexander offered the DIRRP to Representative Rivera. The House took a two hour break to mull it over. It is important to note that the DIRRP was

not the only proposal the House was mulling during this two hour break. While on the break, PBA Lobbyists met with House Leaders to express our opposition. They listened and understood our objections, but we got the impression that this DIRRP was a done deal. The chairmen reconvened the conference committee meeting and the House accepted the Senate offer. Now it should also be noted that by accepting the DIRRP, the House was dropping its bids to cut the salaries of state employees by 3% and the elimination of the Health Insurance Subsidy

(HB 5701) for retirees. On the other side, the Senate was dropping its proposal to require a 0.25 % employee contribution for FRS employees (SB 2022). Once there is an agreement between the chairmen, the issue is final (Unless the whole budget is voted down... seldom happens).

Thankfully two of the few positive people left in the Capitol, **Governor Charlie Crist** and **Lieutenant Governor Jeff Kottkamp**, listened

to our concerns about the punitive nature of this proposal and the Governor used his VETO pen to stop the DIRRP from happening, which has left us in the same position we started in on March 2nd. Nothing gained and nothing lost. We should all show our appreciation to the Governor for his unwavering support over the years and make sure we vote him in as Florida's next United States Senator. Likewise, we urge you to support Lieutenant Governor Kottkamp for Attorney General in the Republican Primary.

*"Thankfully... Governor Charlie Crist and Lieutenant Governor Jeff Kottkamp listened to our concerns..."*

*NOTE: The Florida Police Benevolent Association has its Official Florida Police Benevolent Association Facebook Group. The group is our attempt to diversify how we communicate with our membership, potential members and the public. If you are a member of Facebook, please stop by and check us out at:*

[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

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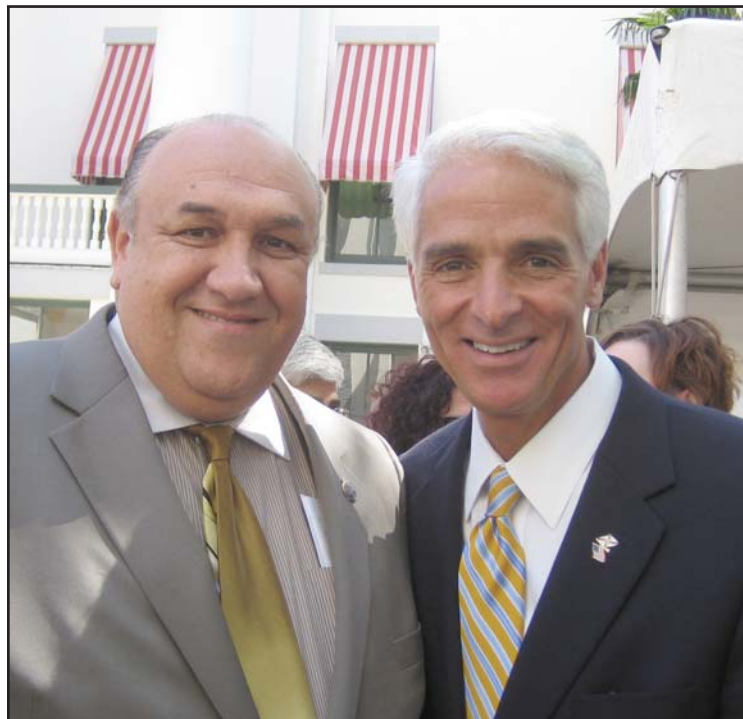
**Some Legislators who were helpful in stopping a lot of the bad legislation include:**

**Senators**

- Mike Haridopolos**
- Mike Fasano**
- Al Lawson**
- Carey Baker**

**Representatives**

- Dean Cannon**
- Will Weatherford**
- Rob Schenck**
- Will Snyder**
- Ron Saunders**
- Sandy Adams**
- Paige Kreegel**
- Jim Waldman**
- Pat Patterson**
- Julio Robaina**
- Eric Eisnaugle**



*Florida PBA President John Rivera and Governor Crist at the Capitol.*



*David Murrell and PBA Treasurer Ernie George meet with Lieutenant Governor Jeff Kottkamp at the Capitol.*

Back to the Legislature, many incumbent Legislators are going to sit down with our screening committee members this month, look them in the eyes, and say, "Gosh, it could have been so much worse for you guys this year... and just wait until next year." They're right too, which is why frustration is running at an all time high. One problem for quite a few of the incumbents though... they were supporting a number of these bad proposals and some incumbents plan on bringing the issues back next year. Another problem for them is they have to be reelected first.

We say this every election year, but it should really ring true this year. We need you to vote for PBA endorsed candidates. We will print a *Special 2010 Election Roll Call* in August which will list all of our endorsements. With the stakes so high for you next year, we ask that you please vote for PBA endorsed candidates only.