



# CAPITOL REPORT

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By Matt Puckett, Deputy Executive Director  
LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY FOR THE WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 8, 2008

## PROFITS IN PROPERTY INSURANCE UNDERSCORE OUR WOES

In an environment reminiscent of the Medical Malpractice Hearings from 2003, the Florida Senate convened a panel to investigate the rate adjustments in the property insurance industry. Many of the Panel members were concerned that certain insurance companies are not offering the relief in the form of rate reductions to the consumers that was anticipated following the property insurance legislation passed during a June Special Session. The mood was heightened by the congressional type atmosphere and because members of the industry were under oath.

The unique circumstances only served to underscore the reality we find ourselves in this year; money is tight... show a profit and you might have some explaining to do.

If only we could have a special panel to investigate why our law enforcement, correctional and correctional probation officers with the state are paid so low. For fans of Stephen Colbert, that panel discussion on state pay woes would be similar to the skits where Mr. Colbert debates himself... but unfortunately not the least bit funny.



Senator Gwen Margolis and Representative Evan Jenne hold a press conference along with PBA Lobbyist Gary Bradford (left) and other members of the law enforcement community to draw attention to legislation strengthening penalties for the use of assault rifles

## 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 Dave Aronberg - TBA**)
- 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 TBA**)
- Support for legislation to add fleeing/eluding a law enforcement officer to list categories for felony murder (**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.

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## **SALARY INCREASES FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT, CORRECTIONAL AND CORRECTIONAL PROBATION OFFICERS**

Lobbyists, Presidents and Board Members from every Chapter/Charter, plus many members of the Florida Police Benevolent Association have combined forces to send a clear message to our legislative leaders, "we need more money!" The lobbyists have used every available opportunity to discuss this issue with every member of the legislature, plus it has been the chief issue addressed when interviewing all potential candidates for legislative office. We are pursuing a budget request for each bargaining unit that provides an across the board salary increase with step increases based on years of service.

We have also come to the realization that in a tight year, we need to think outside of the box or at least let your Chapter Board of Directors lobby for innovative pay supplements and funding sources. Each statewide Chapter is using this year as an opportunity to try a new method to solving the pay problems. Some Chapters are moving specific bills (The FHP Chapter is a prime example) through the legislative process while others are looking to secure money from a source like a trust fund through legislative appropriation. Your leaders have free reign to lobby for any additional money in any way they see fit with the full support of the Florida Police Benevolent Association.

Money will be extremely hard to come by this session. So it should come as no surprise to you that a vocal minority of officers are casting a considerable amount of doubt at the efforts of the PBA to secure any money for your pay raises. Fortunately for you, we happen to believe otherwise and we know that with your support; we can succeed in proving all of our critics and rumor mongers wrong. Please contact your Chapter leaders to find how you can help. We will keep you posted on the situation through this publication, which is published weekly throughout the session.

## **EXTENDING THE DROP TO EIGHT YEARS**

The so called "Eight Year DROP" is moving forward at a steady pace. We are encouraged by the early support we are receiving for this legislation by a wide range of legislative members. Our sponsors, **Senator Carey Baker** and **Representative Julio Robaina**, have identical bills filed in both chambers with the respective committees of reference completed. These are the important first steps in the process. Our lobbying team has spent the last week continuously securing co-sponsorship plus we have met with the Chairman of the first committees of reference to try to schedule a hearing.

We hope to receive a hearing by the first week in March.

## **THE OFFICER MALCOLM THOMPSON ACT**

**Representative Frank Attkisson** has one last chance as a Legislator to make this legislation a reality for the officers of Florida. He is personal friends with Officer Thompson who was catastrophically injured many years ago. Rep. Attkisson has made his determination to pass this legislation well known over the years, but this year he is Council Chairman for the Government Efficiency & Accountability Council, which provides him with an excellent opportunity to move his bill (HB 57) early. We are highly supportive of this excellent legislation that will finally allow an officer who is catastrophically injured in the line of duty by the felonious act of another to completely retire and receive 80% of his or her average final compensation. It's long overdue.

**Senator Steve Oelrich** is the Senate sponsor with **SB 1024**.

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Photo Highlights



Coastal Florida PBA President Vince Champion (left) visits with Representative Thad Altman at his Capitol Office



PBA Lobbyists and Representative Kurt Kelly (left) discuss his legislation to strengthen penalties for dating violence.



PBA Officials meet with Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives Marco Rubio to discuss our legislative agenda. From Left to Right: Deputy Executive Director Matt Puckett, Executive Director David Murrell, Speaker Rubio and Florida PBA Treasurer Ernie George.



Senator Dave Aronberg (right) discusses his sponsorship of our municipal retirement bill with PBA Lobbyist Don Teems (center) and PBA Treasurer and Lobbyist Ernie George (left)