



Florida Police Benevolent Association, Inc.



CAPITOL REPORT

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By Matt Puckett, Deputy Executive Director
LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY FOR THE WEEK ENDING MARCH 14, 2008

SENATE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVES EIGHT YEAR DROP BILL

The **Senate Criminal Justice Committee** held the first hearing of the session on our Eight Year DROP legislation. **Senator Carey Baker's SB 706** was the first bill out of the chute at Tuesday's meeting. He superbly presented how, by extending DROP to eight years, we can continue to provide valuable veteran officers to agencies struggling with low staffing levels. This is the crux of our argument to extend the DROP and it was well received by the committee.



Senator Carey Baker

Senator Jim King worked with the Florida PBA and Senator Baker in order to amend our legislation to erase the loophole of reemployment after retirement. Many of you will remember that the Florida PBA has been adamantly opposed to allowing a person to retire, remain out of work for the statutorily required 30 days and then return to the

same employer at the same position as if nothing ever happened. This practice is an abuse of the system that negatively affects lower ranking officers' upward mobility. Senator King immediately raised the issue with our lobbyists who were more than willing to fix the problem with an amendment to our bill. He graciously offered the amendment during committee meeting. We appreciate his staff member **Kelly Williams** for patiently working with us on the amendment.



Florida PBA lobbyist Jim Spearing (above) testified before the committee on our reasoning for this legislation; doing an excellent job as always. Also offering support for the legislation were members of the **FOP**.

SB 706 is now in the **Senate Community Affairs Committee**.

HOMELAND SECURITY & PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVES INSTITUTIONAL SECURITY SPECIALIST BILL

Representative Pat Patterson has finally found a bill of ours that does not create a ruckus... at least thus far. **HB 427** is simply an update to the definition of correctional officer. It adds the job of institutional security specialist to the definition in s. 943.10 (3) F.S., thereby clarifying the long standing employment practice the Department of Children & Family Services has of employing certified correctional officers to work in the Department's forensic facilities. Representative Patterson has been the sponsor of our reemployment prohibition bill for the last three years, but he had to go through some battles to move that legislation. On Wednesday, in the **House of Representatives' Homeland Security & Public Safety Committee**, he quipped that he wished all his bills moved through a committee with such ease. The committee members quickly voted in support of the bill with no questions asked.



Representative Pat Patterson (center) with PBA Lobbyists following his presentation of HB 427

Florida PBA Deputy Executive Director Matt Puckett offered our support for the bill during the hearing. **HB 427** is now in the **House of Representatives' Safety & Security Council**.

STOP THE "MURDER OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS"

Representative Will Snyder continues to move his bill (**HB 321**), which gets tough on criminals who attempt to kill officers, through the various committees of reference. His legislation will make it a mandatory life sentence if someone even attempts to murder a law enforcement officer. This idea came about after the horrible string of murders that the law enforcement community suffered through last year. Representative Snyder argues that just because someone is a bad shot or missed in the

attempt to kill the officer... this person should still spend life behind bars. So far members of the legislature agree.

On Wednesday, the legislation passed the **House of Representatives' Safety & Security Council** by a unanimous vote. **Florida PBA Lobbyist Gary Bradford** offered support for the legislation during the council meeting.

PBA'S STATEWIDE CHAPTERS MEET WITH SPEAKER RUBIO

On Wednesday, **The Speaker of the House of Representatives Marco Rubio** took time out of his busy schedule to meet with a group PBA officials and leaders from the Statewide Chapters. The meeting centered on efforts to create a trust fund to be used for the exclusive purpose of increasing the salaries of state law enforcement, correctional and correctional probation officers. Speaker Rubio was very open to any ideas, like the bills (**HB 831** and **SB 920**) increasing funding for the FHP, that could generate revenue as long as it did not place additional fees, levies or fines on law abiding citizens. He was frank with us that this year's budget was going to be extremely lean; in fact, he mentioned the latest economic data continues to show decline in state revenues... down another \$1.5 billion from previous estimates.



Speaker Marco Rubio (center) with PBA Officials in the House of Representatives

Florida PBA Executive Director David Murrell laid out our agenda for the session and Speaker Rubio pledged his support on our efforts. **Florida PBA President John Rivera** reminded the Speaker that we measure success in pay and benefits, so his support for more money and extending the DROP is the key to our goals this session. The Speaker joked that unfortunately he drew the short end of the stick for his time as Speaker, having to lead the state during an economic downturn. However, we believe it is his principled leadership along with **Senate President Ken Pruitt** and **Governor Charlie Crist** that will ultimately get the state through this economic storm.

We greatly appreciate the Speaker's advice and candor during this meeting. Right now your statewide chapter presidents and their respective boards are continuing to focus on revenue sources to fund salary increases. We will keep you posted.

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 Mike Fasano – SB 294)**
- 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 Jeff Atwater SB 2770/SB 2774)**
- Support for legislation to require life sentences for murder or attempted murder of a law enforcement officer. **(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.



Governor Charlie Crist (center) shares a moment with Correctional Probation Officers Chapter President Richard Gordon (right) and Senior Vice President Mark Alfieri (left).



(From left to right) Dade County PBA Chaplain Al Lopez, PBA Secretary Mike Clifton, Speaker Marco Rubio and PBA President John Rivera inside the House Chambers.



Senator Charlie Dean (behind the desk) meets with members of the State Correctional Officers Chapter.



State Law Enforcement Officers Board of Directors meet at PBA headquarters in Tallahassee.



Big Bend Chapter President Steve Slade (right) and Vice President Tyler Hall (left) watch the Senate Criminal Justice Committee meeting on Tuesday.



Southwest Florida PBA Chapter President Mick McHale (left) and SCO Chapter President Jim Baiardi (right) pose inside the House Chambers.