



CAPITOL REPORT

300 East Brevard Street, Tallahassee, FL 32301 • 850.222.3329 • FAX: 850.561.0192 • www.flpba.org

By Matt Puckett, Deputy Executive Director
LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY FOR THE WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 13, 2009

APPROPRIATIONS WEEK IN TALLAHASSEE

Perhaps all eyes were fixed on Washington D.C. this past week, but here in Tallahassee the focus was squarely on core missions, critical statewide spending and constitutional requirements.



Governor Charlie Crist met with **President Barack Obama** in Fort Myers to show he supports the President's Federal Stimulus package. That appearance created a political buzz within Florida and the nation, but it underscored the basic challenge our country is facing. Our Republican Governor is more than happy to put partisan politics aside and meet with our Democratic President if the meeting is about bringing federal stimulus dollars to our state to help pay for critical needs. As a principal in the economic collapse, Florida is in no position to be a partisan state.

However, the Legislature is preparing for a future that may not include federal stimulus funding. That's its job. The latest news has the deficit at around \$5 billion below last year's budget, which was just reduced in January. The situation is worsening by about \$100 million a month. Last week most of the appropriations committees were going through each agency's operating budget line by line identifying that the funding is going towards core mission, public safety critical statewide spending and constitutional mandates. The percentage of reduction was estimated as high as 15 %.

As Criminal and Civil Justice Appropriations Chairwoman Sandy Adams stated, "We are now looking at needs versus wants."

President Mark Marland and **Vice President George Lofton** from the **Suncoast PBA** joined the lobbying team in Tallahassee this past week. They made contact with members of their local delegation and attended several meetings related to public safety funding. It was a pleasure to have them up here working with us and we look forward to seeing them again during the regular session.

We are heading into the last week of legislative meetings prior to the start of session, which is **Tuesday, March 3rd**.

PBA LEGISLATION IN DEPTH

PBA Legislative Agenda has something for everyone. Our main objectives were to provide solutions to our issues that were either cost neutral, or revenue generators. Not all of the legislation is universal, so we will start with the broad reaching stuff and work our way down.

Law Enforcement, Correctional, and Correctional Probation Officers Bill of Rights.



SB 624 by Senator Mike Fasano

Referred to Community Affairs; Governmental Oversight and Accountability; Judiciary; Criminal and Civil Justice Appropriations.



Representative Ritch Workman is the House Sponsor

The bill is currently in House Bill drafting.

Synopsis: Currently, an officer who is the subject of a non-criminal investigation can review the complaint and all witness statements prior to the beginning of the investigative interview. This legislation will expand the types of evidence the subject officer can review to include new technology like audio recordings, video recordings, and GPS locator information related to the incident under investigation along with all other subject officer statements. The officer's representative or counsel will also be able to review this information. Finally, the officer will be able to seek remedies from the circuit court if an agency is found to have failed to comply disciplinary procedures.

Expanding the Florida Retirement System's Deferred Retirement Option Program for Law Enforcement, Correctional, and Correctional Probation Officers.**SB 1072 by Senator Carey Baker**

Referred to Criminal Justice; Community Affairs; Governmental Oversight and Accountability; Policy & Steering Committee on Ways and Means.

**HB 605 by Representative Will Snyder**

Referred to Governmental Affairs Policy Committee; Economic Development & Community Affairs Policy Council; Government Operations Appropriations Committee

Synopsis: This legislation will allow an officer to extend his or her DROP date by up to additional 36 months. It also prohibits an officer who terminates following DROP participation from being reemployed by the same employer from which the officer retired. There are two exceptions to the reemployment provision: 1) a retiree can be elected, or appointed by the Governor or cabinet to an office; 2) a retiree may be retained by the same employing agency in a part-time or auxiliary position if the retiree receives no more than \$ 1 per calendar year for services rendered directly for the employing agency.

Firefighters and Municipal Police Officers Retirement Plans.



SB 538 by Senator Carey Baker -

Referred to Community Affairs; Governmental Oversight and Accountability; General Government Appropriations; Policy & Steering Committee on Ways and Means



HB 5 by Representative Ed Hooper

Referred to Governmental Affairs Policy Committee; Economic Development & Community Affairs Policy Council; Finance & Tax Council; Government Operations Appropriations Committee; Full Appropriations Council on General Government & Healthcare

Synopsis: This legislation is a joint effort with the Florida Professional Firefighters with assistance from the Division of Retirement. It seeks to clarify and make a number of changes to local pension plans. Here are the changes pertaining to municipal police:

Revises definitions for purposes of determining prior service credit to include credit for past service federal, state and other county service as long as the service is recognized by the Criminal Justice Standards & Training Commission.

Authorizes terms of office for boards of trustees of pension & retirement trust funds to be revised under certain circumstances to extend from two to four year terms.

Increases to 25 percentage of trust fund assets that board of trustees may invest in foreign securities.

Provides that specified municipalities are eligible to receive premium taxes

Authorizes a municipality receiving police protection services to enact ordinance levying premium tax.

Authorizes retirees to change designation of joint annuitant or beneficiary up to two times without approval of board or prior joint annuitant or beneficiary.

Revises fund distribution procedures with respect to plan termination. This section will allow retirees to receive the assets from a terminated without having to sue the municipality.

Law Enforcement, Correctional, and Correctional Probation Officers Trust Fund.



Senator Dave Aronberg is the Senate sponsor.
The bill is in drafting.



Representative Julio Robaina is the House sponsor.
The bill is in drafting.

Synopsis: This legislation will create revenue by increasing certain fees relating to driver’s licenses, inmates’ canteens, and criminal expunctions to be used as supplemental salary increases for state law enforcement, correctional and correctional probation officers. The funds raised will be deposited into the Criminal Justice Standards & Training Trust Fund for the exclusive purpose of salary supplements.

Special Risk upgrade from two percent to three percent.

SB 1572 by Senator Ted Deutch.
Not yet referenced.



HB 673 by Representative Carl Domino.
Not yet referenced.

Synopsis: 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 closely with the Florida Professional Firefighters on this issue.

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.



Suncoast PBA President Mark Marland (Left) and Vice President George Lofton (Right) meeting with Chief Financial Officer Alex Sink (Center)



Senate President Jeff Atwater (Center) meeting with PBA Treasurer Ernie George (Left) and PBA Executive Director David Murrell (Right) to discuss PBA's Legislative Agenda.



Suncoast President Marland briefing Representative Tom Anderson (Right) on a bill of interest prior to a Committee Meeting.



Suncoast President Marland and Suncoast VP Lofton meeting with Representative Will Weatherford (Right) prior to a Committee Meeting.



PBA Executive Director Murrell and (Right) Senate President Atwater (Left) discussing PBA Legislation.



PBA Lobbyist Gary Bradford (Right), Suncoast President Marland (Center) and Chief Financial Officer Alex Sink (Left) talk shop outside of the Capitol.