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 Director of Organizational Services

Please encourage non-members to join the 36,000 officers throughout Florida who belong to the Florida PBA!

Check out the benefits of PBA membership on page 29.

Call Toll Free: 1-800-733-3722 to join today!

A typical "Showing of Interest" card or "Blue Card" is shown below.

News from Around the State

Organizational Update

Amendment 1: The Storm Has Arrived

Remember all of the rhetoric leading up to the vote on whether the citizens of Florida wanted to roll back their property taxes? We were assured by some that the fundamental government services would not be impacted. Others indicated that passage of the amendment would lead to the collapse of some local governments. Well, the reality of Amendment One has fallen at least initially somewhere in the middle.

It is still too early in the game to gauge the long term impact Amendment One will have on essential public safety services provided by cities and counties. The short term impact is all too clear to those of us at the Florida PBA who act as the chief negotiators for various bargaining units around the state. Let me clarify what I mean when I say the impact has fallen somewhere in the middle. Some employers located in stable property tax markets are continuing to negotiate agreements that allow members of the bargaining units to stay ahead of inflation economically. At the other end of the spectrum, we have employers who are trying to balance their budgets by laying off law enforcement officers or reorganizing their police departments. Most employers fall somewhere in the middle of this range by mandating five to ten percent cuts to their existing budgets. This means that there are either no pay raises or raises that do not keep up with the current rate of inflation (e.g.: the rising cost of fuel and the products affected by the rising cost).

As disconcerting as this landscape may appear to the casual observer, the important factor is that most of these bargaining units are intimately involved in the decision-making process. Bargaining units have a voice in how the changes are going to occur. They also have the ability to modify or completely change an employer's attempt to negatively impact the bargaining unit and benefits gained through the bargaining process.

Now that I have somewhat educated you about my perspective of the current economic landscape, let's talk about the real victims of Amendment One: the law enforcement officers who work for an agency without collective bargaining. The changes in departmental policies, the erosion of pay and benefits, with a stroke of a pen take home cars have been eliminated, and Indianapolis plans have been modified. Pay raises that were promised have not materialized and there have been threats to take back last year's pay raise to balance this year's budget.

Some employers are even suggesting that you have to pay for your own gas if you want to use your patrol vehicle for off duty employment! The list goes on and on.

Those of you who either work for one of these agencies or have friends and family members who do are probably being asking yourselves what options do we have? The answer unfortunately is none. Without collective bargaining rights, your employer has no obligation to consult with you about any changes they intend to make to your pay, benefits, or working conditions. If you want a place at the decision-making table with your employer, the only option that would compel your employer to meet with you and discuss these types of adverse actions prior to implementing them is the collective bargaining process.

How do you get the right to bargain? It is a pretty simple process. First, at least thirty (30) percent of the full time sworn law enforcement officers at your agency must fill out a "showing of interest card" (see bottom left) which states that the individual who fills out the card (dating and signing) desires the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC) to hold an election for the purpose of deciding whether the employees in a defined unit want to be represented for the purposes of

collective bargaining with their employer. [It is also important for everyone to understand that the "showing of interest" cards are completely confidential and are not viewed by the employer at any time.]

If fifty (50) percent plus one (1) of those who voted in a representation election vote for the PBA, then the employer is compelled to negotiate with the members of the defined collective bargaining unit about wages and conditions of employment. Once the parties finalize an agreement, a contract is signed that binds both parties to the terms and conditions of employment the parties agreed to. Once you have an agreement, your employer would have to show you anticipated changes to policies and work conditions prior to implementing them (usually within 10 days). This gives the bargaining unit the right to inform the employer that they wish to negotiate the impact of the proposed change prior to its implementation. [The process of the election and subsequent bargaining process I've described is meant as a snapshot of rights available to public employees in accordance with Florida Statutes.]

In closing, I want to point out a couple of things. First, if your employer has already changed working conditions or is openly discussing implementing changes, starting the collective bargaining process will not preclude them from moving forward with implementing those changes. Second, and most important, if a defined unit (e.g.: sergeants, corporals, and patrolmen) votes to be represented, the employer (in most instances) will go into a holding pattern until such time as the parties can meet and negotiate a collective bargaining agreement that meets both parties'

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FLORIDA POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION, INC. AUTHORIZATION FOR REPRESENTATION

I hereby designate Florida Police Benevolent Association, Inc. as my collective bargaining representative, authorizing Florida PBA or its agents or representatives to act for me as collective bargaining agent in all matters pertaining to rates of pay, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment. *(Please Print)*

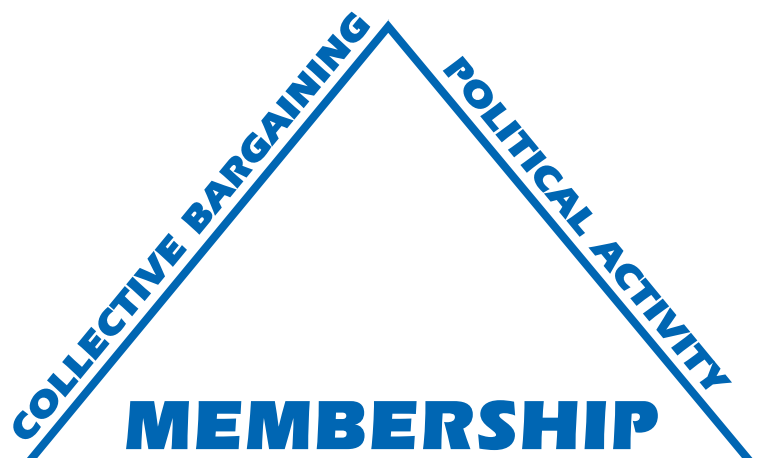
Last Name First Name Middle Initial E-mail Address

Home Address Street City State Zip

Classification and Rank Department Work Site Birth Date

STATE LAW REQUIRES THAT YOU SIGN AND DATE
 AUTHORIZATION FOR REPRESENTATION

Signature Date Home Telephone Number



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