

# FLORIDA SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION



## Florida Sheriffs Youth Learning Center

The Florida Sheriffs Association will request an additional \$9 million from the state budget this year to complete the Florida Sheriffs Youth Learning Center. The center will celebrate over 200 years of sheriff history and offer children opportunities to learn about law enforcement careers.

**Form # 3574 By Rep. Busatta and Form # 1525 by Sen. Simon**

## Officer Jason Raynor Act

In 2021, Officer Jason Raynor was shot and killed by Orthal Wallace while investigating a stolen vehicle. Wallace refused to comply and shot Officer Raynor in the head. Though prosecutors sought a first-degree-murder charge, Wallace was later convicted of manslaughter with a firearm and sentenced to 30 years. He claimed self-defense, arguing the officer was not acting lawfully, exposing a gap in current law that allows defendants to question whether an officer was performing a “legal duty” to justify violence.

This legislation clarifies that individuals cannot use or threaten violence against an officer acting in the performance of official duties, shifting disputes over fault to the court. It amends s. 776.051, F.S., to replace “lawful performance of a legal duty” with “performance of official duties,” closing the loophole used in such defenses. It also amends s. 782.065, F.S., to require a life sentence without release for manslaughter of a law enforcement officer, aligning penalties with those for murder of an officer.

**HB 17 by Representative Baker & SB 156 by Senator Leek**

## Xylazine

While Florida continues to battle the opioid epidemic, a new threat is making this fight even more difficult. Xylazine, or “tranq,” is a veterinary sedative with no approved human use. Despite this, it is increasingly found on the black market, often mixed with fentanyl, heroin, and cocaine. When combined with opioids, Xylazine poses a severe risk, as it mimics opioid effects but does not respond to opioid antagonists like naloxone. Current law only allows charges for possession or distribution of a controlled substance, regardless of amount.



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In response, Florida's Attorney General has moved to classify Xylazine as a Schedule I controlled substance, with an exemption for legitimate veterinary use. This legislation amends s. 893.135, F.S., to include Xylazine in the state's drug trafficking statute. Dealers who unlawfully sell, deliver, or manufacture Xylazine or mixtures containing it will face a first-degree-felony, with mandatory minimum sentences and financial penalties based on quantity. The bill also designates 7-Hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) as Schedule I when above 400 ppm, targeting chemically enhanced kratom products linked to overdoses.

By addressing Xylazine and high-potency 7 OH, this legislation gives law enforcement the tools to hold criminals accountable while safeguarding legitimate veterinary and commercial use.

## **HB 309 by Representative Bankson and SB 432 by Senator Yarborough**

### **Sexual Offender Residency Ban**

Florida law currently prohibits individuals convicted of certain sexual offenses from residing within 1,000 feet of schools, childcare facilities, parks, or playgrounds. However, this restriction does not extend to public swimming pools or public bathing places as defined in Florida Statute 514.011, despite these being common gathering places for children. This legislation will close the gap in current law by amending several Florida Statutes to include public swimming pools and public bathing places within the established 1,000 foot residency restriction for sexual offenders. Additionally, it clarifies the definition of a public swimming pool to explicitly include a spray pool or splash pad – areas that attract young children.

By expanding these protections, this legislation strengthens public safety and provides additional safeguards for our children where they are most vulnerable and most likely to be targeted by sexual predators.

## **HB 45 by Rep. Plakon and SB 212 by Sen. McClain**

### **Victim Safety in Pretrial Release Act**

Under current law, a defendant on pretrial release cannot be arrested for intentionally violating release conditions unless the original charge involves domestic or dating violence. In cases not involving domestic or dating violence, even if a defendant violates a no-contact order, law enforcement cannot take immediate action. Officers may only write a report requesting bond revocation, which can result in dangerous delays.

This legislation closes that gap by extending immediate enforcement of pretrial conditions to all victims. It creates a new statute modeled on s. 741.29, F.S., making it a first-degree misdemeanor for a defendant to knowingly violate pretrial conditions when the original arrest was for a specified violent crime such as assault, manslaughter, or kidnapping. It also authorizes warrantless arrest based on probable cause, mirroring current domestic violence law. Upon arrest, the defendant must be held until first appearance,



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at which time the court will review the violation and set appropriate conditions with the victim and public safety in mind. If the violations targets the same victim or involves a new act or threat of violence, it becomes a third-degree felony. This legislation ensures timely, consistent enforcement of pretrial release conditions and strengthens protections for victims of violent crime.

## **HB 397 by Rep. Daley and SB 760 by Sen. McClain**

### **Expanding Tuition Waiver Eligibility to Sheriff's Office Personnel**

State employees may currently receive up to six tuition-free credit hours per term at state universities and Florida College System institutions through the State Employee Tuition Waiver Program, but Sheriff's Office employees are excluded and must often pay for their own coursework. Some Sheriff's Offices provide tuition assistance, however many cannot due to budget and operational constraints.

This legislation extends the tuition waiver program to Sheriff's Office employees, allowing them to further their education without financial burden. Tuition would be covered through the existing state reimbursement model and would apply only on a space-available basis, ensuring tuition-paying students are not displaced. By broadening access to education, this measure supports professional development, improves retention, and strengthens Florida's public safety workforce.

## **HB 307 by Representative Johnson and SB 372 by Senator Trumbull**

### **Access to the Mental Competency (MECOM) Database**

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) maintains a database of citizens who are prohibited from purchasing firearms due to adjudications of mental defectiveness or commitments to a mental institution, and licensed dealers must check it before approving a sale. With permitless carry now in effect, officers can no longer rely on permit-related background checks to determine whether someone concealed carrying is legally eligible.

Current law does not authorize local law enforcement access to the Mental Competency (MECOM) Database needed to verify eligibility. This legislation amends s. 790.065(2)(a)(4)(f), F.S. to allow Florida's local law enforcement access to the MECOM database to determine if a citizen is eligible to carry a concealed firearm without a permit.



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# Florida Sheriffs Association Legislative Platform

## **Law Enforcement**

*Marsy's Law:* Support legislation to clarify Marsy's Law protects victim information when they ask for their information to be protected.

## **Jails, Corrections & Re-Entry**

*Early Release:* Support Truth in Sentencing laws requiring convicted criminals to serve at least 85% of their sentence.

*Mandatory Minimum Sentencing:* Oppose the elimination of mandatory minimum sentences.

*Expunction of Criminal Records:* Oppose unlimited expunction of criminal records.

## **Administration**

*Florida Retirement System:* Support legislation to assess the financial impact and necessary funding required for an ad hoc cost of living adjustment for future Special Risk Class retirees.

## **Budget**

*Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training Funding:* Support continued funding to train law enforcement officers to safely assess and identify people in mental health crisis and help connect them with community treatment and keep them out of the criminal justice system.

*Community Mental Health Funding:* Support funding for mental health services that will assist persons after they are released from county jails and have to transition back into the community.



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