



I.U.P.A. LOCAL 6020

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF POLICE ASSOCIATIONS
BROWARD DEPUTY SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION
THE VOICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

January 18, 2023

Senator Ed Hooper, Florida State Senate for District 21

3450 East Lake Road South

Suite 305

Palm Harbor, FL 34685

Dear Representative Senator Hooper,

The International Union of Police Associations (I.U.P.A.) Local 6020, the union representing the Department of Law Enforcement Deputies and Sergeants for the Broward County Sheriff's Office, currently represents approximately 1200 members. The I.U.P.A. Local 6020 endorses Senate Bill 224 which will return the retirement eligibility age for Florida Retirement System (FRS) Special Risk members who are comprised of law enforcement officers, firefighters, and correctional officers back to age 55 and return the years of credible service required for these members to be eligible to retire back to 25 years of credible service.

County sheriff's offices, county fire rescue departments, and state law enforcement agencies are reliant on the FRS for retirement eligibility criteria.

As it stands, the retirement age for special risk members is currently at age 60 and potentially age 65 for those special risk members in the Deferred Retirement Option Plan. The job functions of special risk members are extremely physically, mentally, and emotionally demanding. Reaction time is everything for these special risk members not just for their safety but in many circumstances where split second decisions and fast reactions mean the difference between life or death for the members of the public who these special risk members seek to protect. Naturally as people age, our bodies naturally weaken and our reaction times naturally decrease. Lowering



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the retirement eligibility age strengthens the age of the workforce of our first responders allowing them to be more successful in their mission to protect the citizens of the great state of Florida.

Excellent public safety is something every citizen throughout Florida wants. County and state law enforcement and fire rescue departments are constantly in competition with city departments to recruit and retain the best applicants in order to serve and provide the best public safety services available to their respective jurisdictions so the citizens within their communities are safe. As it stands, many city departments have retirement eligibility for their law enforcement officers, firefighters, and correctional officers after 25 years of service and in some instances after 20 years of service giving them a substantial edge in recruitment abilities compared to County and state agencies that currently have 30-year retirement eligibility for special risk members.

The I.U.P.A. Local 6020 stands for law and order, a safe community, and will continue to advocate for the successful passage of SB 224 for the betterment of public safety not only for our first responders but for the broader Florida community.

The I.U.P.A. Local 6020 looks forward to working with you on this matter and extends all available resources at its disposal to assist with passage of Senate Bill 224.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Matt Cowart'. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Matt Cowart

President, I.U.P.A. Local 6020