



I.U.P.A. LOCAL 6020

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF POLICE ASSOCIATIONS

BROWARD DEPUTY SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION

THE VOICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

February 2023 Legislative Progress Report

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Introduction:

The International Union of Police Associations (I.U.P.A.) Local 6020 is proud to announce several positive updates going into the legislative session in our February 2023 Legislative Progress Report. This report contains an update on the meetings I.U.P.A. Local 6020 President Matt Cowart has held with elected officials in the Florida House and Senate to advocate for the members of the I.U.P.A. Local 6020, legislative updates, as well as information from Florida Governor Ron DeSantis's proposed budget.

Legislative Advocation:

Meetings Report

I.U.P.A. Local 6020 President Matt Cowart has conducted numerous meetings with State Representatives, State Senators, and their Legislative Aides to discuss legislative matters beneficial to first responders. Below is number of meetings I.U.P.A. Local 6020 President Matt Cowart has conducted going into the 2023 legislative session.

State Representatives Met With: 70

Legislative Aides to State Representatives Met With: 10

State Senators Met With: 15

State Representatives Met With: 4

Total Meetings: 99



I.U.P.A. Local 6020 President Matt Cowart, Representative Doug Bankson, and Legislative Policy Advisor for the Florida Professional Firefighters Meredith Stanfield

Broward Delegation

The Broward County Legislative Delegation, which consists of members of the Florida House of Representatives and the Florida State Senate based out of Broward County, met recently. I.U.P.A. Local 6020 President Matt Cowart was present to advocate for the I.U.P.A. Local 6020's legislative agenda.



I.U.P.A. Local 6020 President Cowart speaking before the Broward Delegation

Advocation at the Capital

I.U.P.A. Local 6020 President Matt Cowart traveled to Tallahassee this month to advocate for restoration of Special Risk member benefits at the Capital. During the trip to the Capital, on Tuesday, February 14th, 2023, advocates from multiple associations and unions came together and met with Senate Bill sponsor Hooper and House Bill sponsor Busatta Cabrera to ensure a collective effort onward ensues to ensure the passage of House Bill 239 and Senate Bill 224 to return the years of creditable service required for Special Risk members to retire back to 25 years and to place the retirement eligibility age at 55.

Pictured:

Senator Ed Hooper,
Representative Demi Busatta Cabrera,
Matt Cowart (I.U.P.A.),
Bernie Bernoska (Florida Professional Firefighters "FPF"- President),
Rocco Salvatori (FPF- VP),
Jason Berzowski (FPF- 7th District VP)
Meredith Stanfield (FPF- Legislative Director),
Steve Zona (Florida State Fraternal Order of Police "FOP" President),
Ray Colburn (Florida Fire Chiefs Associations),
Matt Dunagan (Florida Sheriff's Association "FSA"- Deputy Executive Director)
Allie McNair (FSA- Governmental Affairs Coordinator),
Matt Puckett (Rutledge Ecenia Lobbying Firm for Florida Police Benevolent Association)
Jennifer Pritt (Florida Police Chiefs Association- Executive Director)



House and Senate Bill Updates:

House Bill 239 and Senate Bill 224 Returning the Florida Retirement System (FRS) Back to 25 Years of Credible Service and Retirement Age Back to 55 for Special Risk Members

- Both House Bill 239 and Senate Bill 224 continue to gather support. The number of state representatives and state senators co-sponsoring the bills in their respective chamber continues to grow. Below is where the bills currently stand in the legislature as well as the number of co-sponsors.
- House Bill 239 committee and subcommittee referrals:
 - Constitutional Rights, Rule of Law & Government Operations Subcommittee
 - Appropriations Committee
 - and State Affairs Committee
- Senate Bill 224 committee and subcommittee referrals:
 - Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee
 - Community Affairs Committee
 - Appropriations Committee

Total House of Representative Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 26

Total State Senator Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 8

House Bill 6003 and Senate Bill 20: Claim Bill for former Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO) Deputy Maury Hernandez

- House Bill 6003 and Senate Bill 20 is a Claim Bill for former BSO Deputy Maury Hernandez who sustained a career ending gunshot wound to the head in 2007 while in the line of duty. Deputy Hernandez survived; however, he sustained physical, mental, emotional, and financial damages.



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Amid Gov. DeSantis' tough-on-crime tour, police union asks state to pay deputy hurt in avoidable shooting

- House Bill 6003 committee and subcommittee referrals:
 - Civil Justice Subcommittee
 - Appropriations Committee
 - Judiciary Committee

- Senate Bill 20 committee and subcommittee referrals:
 - Special Master on Claim Bills
 - Judiciary Committee
 - Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice
 - Appropriations Committee

Total House of Representative Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 2

Total State Senator Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 1

House Bill 169 and Senate Bill 314: Additional Mental Health Counseling for First Responders

- House Bill 169 and Senate Bill 314 which seek to expand upon existing mental health counseling resources for first responders. House Bill 169 and Senate Bill 314 seek to require employers to cover the cost of requested mental health counseling for first responders and to prohibit the employing agency from requiring the first responder to use their own leave accruals to attend the counseling sessions.

- House Bill 169 committee and subcommittee referrals:
 - Constitutional Rights, Rule of Law & Government Operations Subcommittee
 - Appropriations Committee
 - State Affairs Committee

- Senate Bill 314 committee and subcommittee referrals:
 - Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee
 - Community Affairs Committee
 - Fiscal Policy Committee

Total House of Representative Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 6

Total State Senator Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 1

House Bill 95 and Senate Bill 618: Additional Rights for Law Enforcement Officers Faced with Brady List Placement

- House Bill 95 and Senate Bill 618 would require prosecuting agencies to establish written policies which establish the criteria used to place a law enforcement officer on the Brady Giglio list, to provide a law enforcement officer written notice prior to being placed on the Brady Giglio list, and to allow the law enforcement officer to review and provide input prior to being placed on the Brady Giglio list.
- House Bill 95 committee and subcommittee referrals:
 - Criminal Justice Subcommittee (**CURRENTLY ON AGENDA FOR 2/23**)
 - Judiciary Committee
- Senate Bill 618 committee and subcommittee referrals:
 - Criminal Justice Committee
 - Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice
 - Fiscal Policy Committee

Total House of Representative Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 2

Total State Senator Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 1

House Bill 101 and Senate Bill 184: Expansion of Homestead Exemption to Spouses of Federal First Responders Killed in the Line of Duty

- House Bill 101 and Senate Bill 184 seek to expand the homestead exemption to spouses of federal first responders who are killed in the line of duty. The current verbiage in the Florida state statute excludes federal first responders.
- House Bill 101 committee and subcommittee referrals:
 - Ways & Means Committee (**REPORTED FAVORABLE: 2/14/23**)
 - Local Administration, Federal Affairs & Special Districts Subcommittee
 - State Affairs Committee
- Senate Bill 184 committee and subcommittee referrals:
 - Community Affairs Committee
 - Finance & Tax Committee
 - Appropriations Committee

Total House of Representative Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 4

Total State Senator Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 1

House Bill 355 and Senate Bill 354: Increased Penalty for Trafficking in Fentanyl

- House Bill 355 and Senate Bill 354 seek to increase the minimum term of imprisonment for an offender trafficking in 4 grams of more but less than 14 grams from 7 years to 15 years. House Bill 355 also seeks to increase the fine for trafficking in 4 grams of more but less than 14 grams from \$50,000 to \$75,000.
- House Bill 355 committee and subcommittee referrals:
 - Criminal Justice Subcommittee
 - Justice Appropriations Subcommittee
 - Judiciary Committee
- Senate Bill 354 committee and subcommittee referrals:
 - Criminal Justice Committee
 - Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice
 - Fiscal Policy Committee

Total House of Representative Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 2

Total State Senator Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 1

House Bill 269: Increased Penalty for Religious Hate Crimes

- House Bill 269 seek to make it a third-degree felony if an individual projects hateful images onto private property, stalks or harasses someone based on their religious attire, or blocks access to places of worship, such as churches and synagogues.
- House Bill 269 committee and subcommittee referrals:
 - Criminal Justice Subcommittee
 - Justice Appropriations Subcommittee
 - Judiciary Committee
- Total House of Representative Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 30

House Bill 67 and Senate Bill 174: Increased Penalty for Obscene or Harassing Telephone Calls

- House Bill 67 and Senate Bill 174 seek to have the penalty for obscene or harassing phone calls increased from a 2nd degree misdemeanor to a 3rd degree felony.
 - House Bill 67 committee and subcommittee referrals:
 - Criminal Justice Subcommittee
 - Justice Appropriations Subcommittee
 - Judiciary Committee
 - Senate Bill 174 committee and subcommittee referrals:
 - Criminal Justice Committee
 - Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice
 - Fiscal Policy Committee

Total House of Representative Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 1

Total State Senator Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 1

Governor DeSantis's Proposed Budget:

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis has unveiled his *Framework for Freedom Budget* proposal for Fiscal Year 2023-2024. The budget totals \$114.8 billion, with total reserves exceeding \$15 billion. Below is the *Florida Retirement System* portion from the budget's published highlights.

Florida Retirement System

Governor DeSantis recommends increasing the employer contribution for employee FRS Investment accounts by an additional **three percent** of the member's salary. When combined with the three percent increase provided in the current year, the **six percent** increase will provide members with more financial security upon retirement.

Furthermore, the Governor recommends increasing the pension benefits of retired FRS members by **four percent** to mitigate the loss of purchasing power faced by these former employees as a result of the recent inflationary surge.

Pension Unfunded Liability – Based on the reduction of the investment return assumption from 6.8 percent to 6.7 percent by the FRS Actuarial Assumptions Estimating Conference on October 20, 2022, the unfunded actuarial liability (UAL) of the Florida Retirement System (FRS) Defined Benefit Program, known as the state's pension program, amounted to **\$38.3 billion** on June 30, 2022. Based on an actuarial

liability of **\$217.4 billion** and an actuarial value of assets of **\$179.2 billion**, the program is **82.4 percent** funded as of June 30, 2022.

The Governor's Framework for Freedom Budget fully funds the required employer contributions to ensure the long-term solvency of retirement benefits our state employees, particularly our law enforcement officers and teachers, rely on.

Questions, Feedback, or Suggestions:

Anyone who has any questions, feedback, or suggestions regarding the I.U.P.A. Local 6020's legislative priorities or this *Legislative Progress Report* can email I.U.P.A. Local 6020 President Matt Cowart at matt@6020.iupa.org .