



I.U.P.A. LOCAL 6020

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF POLICE ASSOCIATIONS

BROWARD DEPUTY SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION

THE VOICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

March 2023 Legislative Progress Report

Published March 31, 2023

The International Union of Police Associations (I.U.P.A.) Local 6020 is proud to announce several positive updates in the legislative session in our March 2023 Legislative Progress Report. **The I.U.P.A. Local 6020's top priority in the legislative session is currently House Bill 239 and Senate Bill 224 which seeks to restore numerous benefits for the Florida Retirement System for Special Risk Class members. The bill includes returning the retirement eligibility age to 55, returning the years of creditable service to be eligible to retire to 25 years, restoration of the 3% cost of living adjustment, increasing the employer contribution rate to 18% for investment plan members, and increasing the DROP interest rate to 4%.** This report contains an update on the meetings the I.U.P.A. Local 6020 has held with elected officials in the Florida House and Senate as well as legislators in Washington DC to advocate for the members of the I.U.P.A. Local 6020, and legislative updates on bills supported by the I.U.P.A. Local 6020.



I.U.P.A. Local 6020 President Matt Cowart speaking to the Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee in the Florida State Senate Urging them to Pass Senate Bill 224 and Restore FRS benefits.

Legislative Advocation:

Meetings Report

I.U.P.A. Local 6020 President Matt Cowart and I.U.P.A. Local 6020 Vice President Don Prichard have conducted **well over 100 meetings** with State Representatives, State Senators, and their Legislative Aides to advocate for the restoration of FRS benefits and to discuss other legislative matters beneficial to law enforcement officers.



I.U.P.A. Local 6020 President Matt Cowart, Senate President Pro Tempore Dennis Baxley, and I.U.P.A. Local 6020 Vice President Don Prichard



I.U.P.A. Local 6020 President Matt Cowart, Deputy Majority Leader Snyder, and I.U.P.A. Local 6020 Vice President Don Prichard

Advocation at the Florida Capitol

I.U.P.A. Local 6020 President Matt Cowart has traveled to the Florida Capitol multiple times along with I.U.P.A. Local 6020 Vice President Don Prichard and Secretary-Treasurer Greg LaCerra to advocate for the restoration of FRS benefits. The I.U.P.A. Local 6020 has been and will continue to travel to the Capitol every time House Bill 239 and Senate Bill 224 are presented to their respective committees and advocate to the legislators on those committees to pass the bills and restore the FRS benefits that effect the members of this union and Special Risk Class members statewide.



I.U.P.A. Local 6020 President Matt Cowart speaking to the Appropriations Committee in the Florida House of Representatives Urging them to Pass House Bill 239 and Restore FRS benefits.



I.U.P.A. Local 6020 President Matt Cowart speaking to the Constitutional Rights, Rule of Law & Government Operations Subcommittee in the Florida House of Representatives Urging them to Pass House Bill 239 and Restore FRS benefits.

Advocacy at the United States Capital

I.U.P.A. Local 6020 President Matt Cowart and I.U.P.A. Local 6020 Vice President Don Prichard traveled to Washington D.C. this month to meet with members of the United States Congress and their Legislative Correspondents to advocate legislative issues relevant to first responders to include codifying qualified immunity, expanding the Law Enforcement Officer Safety Act which allows active and retired law enforcement officers to carry a firearm in other states, and the social security fairness act to eliminate pension offsets.



United States Congressman Brian Mast, I.U.P.A. Local 6020 President Matt Cowart, and I.U.P.A. Local 6020 Vice President Don Prichard.

House and Senate Bill Updates:

House Bill 239 and Senate Bill 224 Restoration of Florida Retirement System (FRS) Benefits

- Both House Bill 239 and Senate Bill 224 continue to gather support. House Bill 239 has passed through its referred committees in the Florida House of Representatives. House Bill 239's next step is for it to be presented to the House floor for a floor vote. Senate Bill 224 currently has two more committees to proceed through before advancing to a vote before the entire State Senate. 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 (**REPORTED FAVORABLE**)
 - Appropriations Committee (**REPORTED FAVORABLE**)
- Senate Bill 224 committee and subcommittee referrals:
 - Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee (**REPORTED FAVORABLE**)
 - Community Affairs Committee
 - Appropriations Committee

Total House of Representative Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 65

Total State Senator Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 21

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 **(REPORTED FAVORABLE)**
 - Community Affairs Committee
 - Fiscal Policy Committee

Total House of Representative Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 9

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 (**REPORTED FAVORABLE**)
 - Judiciary Committee (**REPORTED FAVORABLE**)
- Senate Bill 618 committee and subcommittee referrals:
 - Criminal Justice Committee (**REPORTED FAVORABLE**)
 - Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice
 - Fiscal Policy Committee

Total House of Representative Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 4

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**)
 - Local Administration, Federal Affairs & Special Districts Subcommittee (**REPORTED FAVORABLE**)
 - State Affairs Committee (**REPORTED FAVORABLE**)
- Senate Bill 184 committee and subcommittee referrals:
 - Community Affairs Committee (**REPORTED FAVORABLE**)
 - Finance & Tax Committee (**REPORTED FAVORABLE**)

- Appropriations Committee

Total House of Representative Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 9

Total State Senator Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 2

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: 3

Total State Senator Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 1

House Bill 269 and Senate Bill 994: Increased Penalty for Religious Hate Crimes

- House Bill 269 and Senate Bill 994 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 **(REPORTED FAVORABLE)**
 - Justice Appropriations Subcommittee **(REPORTED FAVORABLE)**
 - Judiciary Committee **(ON AGENDA FOR 3/31/2023)**
- Senate Bill 994 committee and subcommittee referrals:

- Criminal Justice Committee (**REPORTED FAVORABLE**)
- Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice
- Rules Committee

Total House of Representative Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 68

Total State Senator Sponsor and Co-Sponsors: 5

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 (**REPORTED FAVORABLE**)
 - Justice Appropriations Subcommittee
 - Judiciary Committee
 - Senate Bill 174 committee and subcommittee referrals:
 - Criminal Justice Committee (**ON AGENDA FOR 4/4/2023**)
 - 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

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 .