

FPF Legislative Session Report

March 25-29, 2019



With the fourth week complete, several committees have had their last meeting. The legislature's attention is now focused on moving the remaining bills in the committee process to the floor and completing the budget process. Both the Senate and House have their appropriation bills (SB 2500 & HB 5001) on the special order calendar for Wednesday, April 3rd.

Our bills on Cancer Coverage and Firefighter Bill of Rights have moved through the committee process in the Senate with very little to no objections. The process identified some concerns, which were rectified to allow the bills to continue with overwhelming support. In fact, neither bill received a single nay vote in any of the committees, which is how the legislative process is intended to work.

By vetting bills in the committee process, testimony is received to fully understand the pros and cons of the bill and allow necessary amendments to move bills to the floor for a full vote of the chamber. When bills are not given a hearing, the process doesn't work, which is the case for these two bills in the House.

To say that we are very disappointed is an understatement. We are not saying every bill gets a hearing; some bills just don't have an immediate need, public outcry or large group of cosponsors. That is not the case with the Cancer Coverage bill, with a broad bipartisan support of more than 60 cosponsors, clearly there is a desire with a sufficient number of affirmative votes to move the bill through the process and pass it on the House floor.

In a statement from the office of the Speaker, "The Florida House has overwhelmingly supported tax breaks for surviving spouses of first responders who died in the line of duty, as well as property tax exemptions for totally and permanently disabled first responders and surviving spouses. We take a backseat to no one in our appreciation for our firefighters and police. However, this is an issue best dealt with at the county level as each department faces varying levels of danger and exposure and counties are best equipped to tailor benefits to need within available resources."

To that point, these are issues that would have been considered in the committee process if the bill had been heard. Each member representing their area, including the local governments, would have been able to address these concerns. In the Senate, the League of

Cities shared concerns with the Cancer Bill; however, they support the bill's concept in lieu of providing coverage for job-related exposures in the workers compensation system. Some counties and cities openly supported the bill and its coverage. Interestingly enough, firefighter cancer coverage did not make the list of bills or subject matter opposed in the League's Legislative agenda.

Back in early February, we officially requested an opportunity to discuss some of the concerns the Speaker may have with the Cancer Bill. We communicated our concern with the safety of our firefighters, as we were sure the Speaker and local government share that concern. We advised in writing that we looked forward to doing anything possible to aid in the creation of, and adherence to, the best practices to include the use of safety equipment and long-term decontamination policies within the fire service.

As the process is designed to flush out issues and find the best public policy for inclusion into law or administrative rule, a few committee meetings would have identified the concerns of the House and allowed for amendments to move the bill forward. We remain ready to meet to address these concerns. Preventing exposures to cancer causing carcinogens has a cost, but it pales in comparison to the cost of treatment for cancer. It is clear to us that most people believe that firefighters are putting themselves in harm's way to protect the public, and if a firefighter is diagnosed with a job-related cancer, the employer should protect them and their family.

The CFO agency bills (SB 1704 by Wright and HB 1393 by Clemons) continue to move through the committee process and both bills contain language that directs the division to adopt rules to establish employer cancer prevention best practices relating to personal protective equipment, decontamination, fire suppression apparatus, and fire stations.

Florida Constitutional Amendment 7 was approved by the voters in November 2018 and requires the payment of death benefits to the survivors of certain first responders, Florida National Guard members, and members of the United States Armed Forces.

The subsequent bills expand the death benefits currently provided to the above-mentioned groups by increasing the amount of the benefits. There are two major improvements, which increase the \$50,000 benefit to \$75,000 when an eligible member is accidentally killed or receives accidental bodily injury that results in the loss of the individual's life or when the accidental death occurs as a result of the response to an emergency. There is also an increase from \$150,000 to \$225,000 when an eligible member is unlawfully and intentionally killed or dies as a result of such unlawful and intentional act while engaged in the performance of official duties.

Next week is turning out to be very busy with the Memorial unveiling and the Annual Awards Ceremony for the Professional Firefighter of the year by the Governor and Cabinet. We also have the Fire Caucus reception, walking the halls of the Capitol, and the King of the Hill Softball Game. Safe travels to everyone coming to Tallahassee.

In addition to Vice President Rocco Salvatori and Secretary/Treasurer Gilbert Marsh, we had 3rd DVP Wayne Bernoska that traveled to Tallahassee; their assistance is greatly appreciated.

Retirement

SB 7016 State-administered Retirement Systems (Governmental Oversight and Accountability)

FPF Position: Support

3/27/2019 SENATE Meeting cancelled - Appropriations, 03/28/19, 9:00 am, 412 K. 3/28/2019 SENATE Placed on Calendar, on 2nd reading. 3/28/2019 SENATE Placed on Special Order Calendar, 04/03/19.

Safety and Health

HB 723 Fire Protection Systems (Donalds)

Companion Bill: SB 908 (Hooper)

FPF Position: Support

3/26/2019 HOUSE Favorable by Business & Professions Subcommittee; 13 Yeas, 2 Nays. 3/27/2019 HOUSE Now in Government Operations & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee.

SB 908 Firesafety Systems (Hooper)

Companion Bill: HB 723 (Donalds)

FPF Position: Support

3/28/2019 SENATE On Committee agenda - Community Affairs, 04/02/19, 2:00 p.m. 301 S.

HB 1393 Department of Financial Services (Clemons)

FPF Position: Support

3/25/2019 HOUSE Now in Government Operations & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee. 3/28/2019 HOUSE On Committee agenda - Government Operations & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee, 04/01/19, 12:00 pm, 17 H.

SB 1548 Death Benefits (J. Rodriguez)

Companion Bill: HB 7105 (Oversight, Transparency & Public Management Subcommittee)

FPF Position: Support

Death Benefits; Reenacting and amending specified provisions relating to death benefits for law enforcement, correctional, and correctional probation officers, and firefighters, respectively; revising the payment amounts of death benefits; establishing a death benefit for emergency medical technicians and paramedics to conform to s. 31, Art. X of the State Constitution, etc. Effective Date: 7/1/2019. 2/28/2019 SENATE Filed. 3/8/2019 SENATE Referred to Governmental Oversight and Accountability; Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government; Appropriations.

SB 1704 Department of Financial Services (Wright)

FPF Position: Support

3/27/2019 SENATE Committee Substitute Text (C1) Filed. 3/27/2019 SENATE Now in Innovation, Industry, and Technology. 3/28/2019 SENATE On Committee agenda - Innovation, Industry and Technology, 04/02/19, 10:00 am, 110 S.

SB 7098 Death Benefits (Governmental Oversight and Accountability)

FPF Position: Support

Death Benefits; Amending provisions relating to death benefits for law enforcement, correctional, and correctional probation officers and for firefighters, respectively; revising the payment amounts of death benefits; establishing a death benefit for emergency medical technicians and paramedics to conform to s. 31, Art. X of the State Constitution; specifying eligibility and payment amounts for such death benefits, etc. Effective Date: 7/1/2019. 3/28/2019 SENATE Filed. 3/28/2019 SENATE On Committee agenda - Governmental Oversight and Accountability, 04/02/19, 10:00 am, 301 S.

[HB 7105 Death Benefits for Survivors of First Responders and Military Members \(Oversight, Transparency & Public Management Subcommittee\)](#)

[Companion Bill: SB 1548 \(J. Rodriguez\)](#)

[FPF Position: Support](#)

Death Benefits for Survivors of First Responders and Military Members: Revises & provides certain death benefits to law enforcement officers, correctional & correctional probation officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, & members of Florida National Guard & United States Armed Forces; provides for distribution of such benefits; provides that such benefits are in addition to other benefits; provides requirements for employer to procure insurance; specifies funding sources for such benefits; authorizes specified number of hours of educational expenses to be waived by certain educational institutions & provides requirements therefor; requires SBE & BOG to adopt rules; specifies that surviving spouse & children of deceased servicemember may receive only one educational benefit; provides declaration of important state interest. Effective Date: July 1, 2019. 3/26/2019 HOUSE Filed (Formerly PCB OTM18). 3/27/2019 HOUSE Referred to Appropriations Committee; State Affairs Committee. 3/27/2019 HOUSE Now in Appropriations Committee.

[Governmental Operations](#)

[HB 67 Police, Fire, and Search and Rescue Dogs \(Tomkow\)](#)

[Companion Bill: SB 96 \(Bean\)](#)

[FPF Position: Support](#)

3/25/2019 HOUSE Placed on Calendar, on 2nd reading.

[SB 96 Police, Fire, and Search and Rescue Dogs and Police Horses \(Bean\)](#)

[Companion Bill: HB 67 \(Tomkow\)](#)

[FPF Position: Support](#)

3/25/2019 SENATE Placed on Calendar, on 2nd reading. 3/25/2019 SENATE Placed on Special Order Calendar, 03/27/19. 3/27/2019 SENATE Read Second Time; Placed on Third Reading, 04/03/19.

[SB 248 Public Records/Civilian Personnel Employed by a Law Enforcement Agency \(Hooper\)](#)

[Companion Bill: HB 203 \(Zika\)](#)

[FPF Position: Support](#)

3/27/2019 SENATE Read Third Time; Passed (Vote: 39 Yeas / 1 Nays).

[SB 494 The Firefighters' Bill Of Rights \(Hooper\)](#)

[Companion Bill: HB 161 \(Casello\)](#)

[FPF Position: Support](#)

3/25/2019 SENATE Placed on Calendar, on 2nd reading.

[Workers Compensation](#)

[HB 983 Ratification of Rules of the Department of Financial Services \(Casello\)](#)

[Companion Bill: SB 1210 \(Book\)](#)

[FPF Position: Support](#)

3/25/2019 HOUSE Favorable by Oversight, Transparency & Public Management Subcommittee; 13 Yeas, 0 Nays. 3/25/2019 HOUSE Now in Commerce Committee.

[SB 1210 Ratification of Rules of the Department of Financial Services \(Book\)](#)

[Companion Bill: HB 983 \(Casello\)](#)

[FPF Position: Support](#)

3/25/2019 SENATE Favorable by Banking and Insurance; 6 Yeas, 0 Nays. 3/25/2019 SENATE Now in Rules.

Watch Bills

HB 441 E911 Systems (DuBose)

3/26/2019 HOUSE Favorable with CS by Energy & Utilities Subcommittee; 13 Yeas, 0 Nays. 3/28/2019 HOUSE Committee Substitute Text (C1) Filed. 3/29/2019 HOUSE Now in Government Operations & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee.

HB 487 Carrying of Firearms by Tactical Medical Professionals (D. Smith)

3/26/2019 HOUSE Favorable by Health Quality Subcommittee; 10 Yeas, 0 Nays. 3/26/2019 HOUSE Now in Judiciary Committee.

SB 722 Carrying of Firearms by Tactical Medical Professionals (Hooper)

3/28/2019 SENATE On Committee agenda - Infrastructure and Security, 04/02/19, 2:00 p.m., 110 S.

HB 803 Special Risk Class (Aloupis)

3/25/2019 HOUSE Temporarily Postponed by Oversight, Transparency & Public Management Subcommittee

HB 901 City of West Palm Beach, Palm Beach County (Willhite)

3/26/2019 HOUSE On Committee agenda - State Affairs Committee, 03/28/19, 10:30 am, 17 H. 3/28/2019 HOUSE Favorable by State Affairs Committee; 19 Yeas, 0 Nays. 3/28/2019 HOUSE Placed on Calendar, on 2nd reading.