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Polk County Sheriff's Office



1891 Jim Keene Blvd
Winter Haven, Florida
33880

Dear Theresa,


I have a very important message about the future of the Florida Retirement System. The Florida Legislature is now considering significant changes to the retirement system that have the potential to lower retirement benefits for state and local employees, such as teachers, law enforcement officers, and fire and EMS personnel.

The Florida Retirement System (FRS) is financially sound.

The FRS has approximately \$109.5 billion in assets (as of July 1, 2010). The Defined Benefit Plan is considered by experts to be actuarially sound (the FRS actuarial funding level is 87.9%--industry experts consider an actuarial funding level of over 80% to be a well funded program) and it has long been considered one of the top three financially solid public retirement systems in the United States. With incremental changes, FRS will be 100%+ funded.

What I am concerned about is that some want to make wholesale changes to FRS that will extract billions of dollars of contributions from the actuarially sound FRS to plug holes in the State's budget. I am against drastic reductions to earned benefits for our Sheriff's Office employees, and I have communicated my position to our legislators and directly to the Governor. The Florida Sheriff's Association is also standing against reductions in FRS earned benefits.



863.298.6200 

Based upon the latest information we have, there will be a "committee bill" from the House Government Operations Subcommittee (and presumably a similar bill in the Florida Senate) that will include a number of "reforms." These reforms may effectively reduce the value of FRS retirement benefits and may affect accrual rates, require employee contributions, increase retirement age and/or years of service requirements, and other possible changes.

I know how much you support the hard work and sacrifices our Sheriff's deputies make every day to keep the people of Polk County safe. Like teachers, deputies do what they do because they are dedicated to helping improve the quality of life, and *not* because they get paid a terrific salary. A secure and reliable retirement is one thing that they look forward to earning, after a long career of serving the people of this county and this state.

Many of you probably have friends or relatives serving as deputies, teachers, firefighters, and paramedics. If you support us in our endeavor, please consider contacting our elected officials and let them know that you oppose taking away promised FRS benefits and that you oppose diverting FRS contributions to pay for other things in the state budget. Please join us in contacting your elected representatives and let them know your opinions.

For your reference, the following is contact information for Representatives and Senators who represent, at least in part, Polk County:

FLORIDA REPRESENTATIVES:

Seth McKeel (R), District 63, 863-647-4896 or 850-488-9890,
seth.mckeel@myfloridahouse.gov;

Kelli Stargel (R), District 64, 863-614-9156 or 850-488-2270,
kelli.stargel@myfloridahouse.gov;

John Wood (R), District 65, 863-419-3470 or 850-488-2721,
john.wood@myfloridahouse.gov;

Ben Albritton (R), District 66, 863-534-0073 or 850-488-9465,
ben.albritton@myfloridahouse.gov;

Mike Horner (R), District 79, 863-943-3077 or 850-488-8992,
mike.horner@myfloridahouse.gov;

FLORIDA SENATORS:

Ronda Storms (R), District 10, 863-651-2189 or 850-487-5072,

storms.ronda.web@flsenate.gov;

Paula Dockery (R), District 15, 863-413-2900 or 850-487-5040,

dockery.paula.web@flsenate.gov;

J.D. Alexander (R), District 17, 863-679-4847 or 850-487-5044,

alexander.jd.web@flsenate.gov;

Contact Information for the Governor, House Speaker, and Senate President:

Governor **Rick Scott**

Office of the Governor

The Capitol

400 S. Monroe Street

Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Phone: 850-488-7146

Fax: 850-922-4292

The Honorable **Dean Cannon**, Speaker

Florida House of Representatives

420 The Capitol

402 South Monroe Street

Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

(850) 488-2742

dean.cannon@myfloridahouse.gov

The Honorable **Mike Haridopolos**, President

Florida Senate

409 The Capitol

404 South Monroe Street

Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

(850) 487-5056

haridopolos.mike.web@flsenate.gov

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

Sheriff Grady Judd

Second Annual "Bustin' Clays With Sheriff Grady Judd"

The Second Annual Polk Sheriff's
Charities, Inc. "Bustin' Clays with



Sheriff Grady Judd" event will be held Saturday, March 5, 2011, at Tenoroc Sporting Clays in Lakeland.

The public is invited to join Sheriff Judd, PCSO members, and our many gracious sponsors at this charity event - all proceeds raised will go to Polk Sheriff's Charities, Inc., a non-profit organization created to assist family members of agency members who have lost their lives in the line of duty, and which also helped fund the Polk County Sheriff's Office Law Enforcement Memorial.

The memorial, which was dedicated on January 18, 2011, honors those members of the Polk County Sheriff's Office who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our safety and freedom.

WHEN: Saturday, March 5, 2011

REGISTRATION: 7:00 a.m.

SHOTGUN START: 8:30 a.m. at Tenoroc Sporting Clays, located at 3755 Tenoroc Mine Road in Lakeland

FOR MORE INFORMATION: 863.298.6604 

Lunch, Ammo and Gift Bags are included with each registration!

TO REGISTER ONLINE:

<http://www.polksheriff.org/PSCI/BustinClays/Pages/default.aspx>

"We all had a great time participating in this event last year, and we hope for an even better turnout this year," said Sheriff Grady Judd.

"Come on out, shoot some clays, and help honor our fallen heroes. We hope to see you there!"

PCSO Memorial Dedication

A Hero Remembered Never Dies



When the design of the new Sheriff's Operation Center was begun, one key element was at the top of the list - a memorial for Polk County Sheriff's Office Heroes.

Months of planning went into the project as a PCSO special project team dedicated themselves to creating the perfect design which would reflect the professionalism and commitment of those being honored. The memorial depicts the names of all members and canines who paid the ultimate price while serving the citizens of our county.

Bronze statues of Deputy Sheriff Matt Williams and K-9 DiOGi, and Sergeant Ronnie Brown, stand guard in front of the granite marker resting in the center of a small waterfall and pond which honors each member who sacrificed their lives while protecting Polk County. The outer barrier of the pond holds granite tiles etched with the names of each hero.

A ceremony dedicating the memorial was held on January 18, 2011. Florida Lieutenant Governor Jennifer Carroll joined Sheriff Judd and executive staff members in the late afternoon ceremony. Family and friends of those honored also participated.

Funding for the memorial was provided by donations made to, and fundraisers held by, Polk Sheriff's Charities, Inc.

Special thanks to Gwinnell Brant, D/S Ray Brown, D/D Daniel LaCapra, D/S Linnis Feagle, Sgt. Glenn Ferrell, Ms. Stephanie Mier, D/D Marcus Sanders, Det. Mike Woods and Sheriff Grady Judd for their time and talents in creating a tribute that provides PCSO members and visitors a visually peaceful sanctuary of reflection and honor.

Crime Prevention Tip Of The Month: Reporting Gang Activity

The Polk County Sheriff's Office proactively patrols the county to combat gang activity and wipe out gang graffiti wherever it occurs. Gangs members are known to participate in a variety of anti-social behaviors, including robbery, larceny, battery, sexual assault, damage to property, illegal drug trafficking, retail theft, murder, gang wars and other criminal activity. Gang members "tag" areas with graffiti to advertise their established "turf." The first step to stopping gang violence is awareness.



What is a Gang?

The definition of a gang varies somewhat by state and local jurisdiction. In Florida, the legal definition for a criminal gang is defined in Florida Statutes 874. However, the following criteria are commonly accepted:

- The group has three or more members.
- Members of the group identify themselves with a name, colors, symbols, or any other means which identifies them as being a distinct group.
- The group has some level of organization and leadership.
- Members see themselves as a gang and want others to recognize them as a gang.
- The group creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation.
- When its members commit criminal acts to further their group's social or economic status, they are considered a criminal gang.

Warning Signs That Your Child May Be Involved With A Gang

Gang involvement does not happen overnight. It is a gradual process and if you are alert you will see warning signs.

- Exhibits negative changes in behavior such as:
 - Withdrawing from family

- Declining school attendance, performance, behavior
- Staying out late without reason
- Displaying unusual desire for privacy or secrecy; does not want parents to enter his/her bedroom
- Exhibiting signs of drug use, including alcohol
- Breaking rules consistently
- Has been in trouble with police
- Exhibits gang characteristics or culture such as:
 - Admits to "hanging out" with gang members; or admits to gang membership
 - Shows unusual interest in one or two particular colors of clothing or a particular logo
 - Has unusual interest in gangster-influenced music, videos, movies or web sites
 - Begins "dressing down" or "staffing and bagging" in gang attire
 - Uses unusual hand signals to communicate with friends
 - Speaks in gang-style slang
 - Draws, or has specific drawings of gang symbols/signs on school books, clothes, walls or tattoos
 - Comes home with unexplained physical injuries such as fighting-related bruises, injuries to hand/knuckles
 - Has unexplained cash or goods, such as clothing or jewelry
 - Carries a weapon

These items are characteristic of gang involvement. However, some people who join or associate with gangs do not dress in the traditional attire and do not exhibit conspicuous behavior to show their gang involvement in order to hide themselves from law enforcement.

Another key step to preventing gang violence is partnerships: parents, educators, and communities as a whole, must band together to influence the problems known to lead to gang crime and violence. Together, through committed partnerships, we must expose the destructive reality of gang culture, shut off the pipeline that delivers kids to gangs, take steps to prevent gang formation, and break the cycle of gang violence.

What Can Parents Do To Prevent Gang Involvement?

- Be Aware
 - Know who your children's friends are; learn real names of your children's friends, get to know their families
 - Be a good observer - pay attention to your child's behavior
 - Know about who and what influences your kids
 - Pay attention to the music they listen to, the video games they play, the television and movies they watch
 - Monitor internet activity, including internet social networking activity
 - Monitor cell phone usage, text messaging, and other forms of communication with their friends
 - Know what your children are doing at all times
 - Seek the facts - kids will tell you what you want to hear
 - Learn about gangs and drugs

- Do Not Tolerate Drugs and Violence
 - Do not allow them to wear gang attire
 - Monitor living space for gang paraphernalia, weapons, and drugs
 - Do not allow your children to 'hang out' in the streets or mall
 - Be very suspicious of gang writing, graffiti, or tattoos
 - Encourage anti-gang attitudes at home
 - Set clear limits - follow through with discipline if they break the rules
 - Report all crimes

- Be Proactive
 - Become involved with your children and spend quality time with them
 - Strive for good communication between you and your children, talk and listen to them
 - Praise you children for doing well
 - Provide supervised recreational and leisure-time activities for youngsters; encourage your children to participate in positive activities; involve your children in positive group activities
 - Teach your children decision making skills - help them make the right choices
 - Put a high value on education; participate in your

child's education-find out what's happening at school

- Get involved in your community and school affairs
- Set the example for your kids, they will do what you do
- Identify with positive role models
- Believe in your children

How Do I Report Gang Activity?

Everyone has a right to live in a safe neighborhood. The presence of criminal gangs is associated with threats such as assault and battery, burglary and retail crimes, illicit drug sales, illegal weapons possession, and vandalism. These problems won't be fixed until the community takes a strong stand that such behaviors will not be tolerated. One step in that direction is to report crimes and suspicious criminal behavior. If gang-related activities go unchecked, gangs are free to terrorize individuals and communities.

Never attempt to confront a gang, or even tell gang members to leave the neighborhood. You could be seriously injured or even killed.

Report A Crime To Your Local Law Enforcement Agency

For life threatening emergencies and emergencies that require immediate police assistance: Dial 9-1-1.

For non-emergency reporting, contact PCSO or your local police department. Be prepared to provide a detailed description of what you witnessed when you call to report an incident. Local phone numbers can be found in the front of your local phone book, or through an internet search. Some communities have gang hotlines.

Report A Crime Anonymously

Anonymous means that nobody knows who you are and there is absolutely no way to find out. Heartland Crimestoppers is a completely independent organization which allows you to provide tips or details of a crime without revealing your identify. Dial 1-800-226-TIPS (8477) or you can make an anonymous tip online at www.heartlandcrimestoppers.com.

PCSO and LPD Detectives Break Up Organized Retail Theft Ring

Polk County Sheriff's detectives, partnering with the Lakeland Police Department, Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, Plant City Police Department, and Beall's Loss Prevention personnel, arrested four people for Organized Retail Theft during the weekend of February 4-6, 2011.

The investigation began in January 2011 when detectives with the Polk County Sheriff's Office received information that two Lakeland women, 32-year-old Marjoree Poll of 1121 South Central Avenue in Lakeland, and 42-year-old Miriam Bermejo of 1128 Oakhill Street in Lakeland, were stealing items from different stores around Polk County and giving them to their "fences," 54-year-old Salvador Carvajal of Plant City, and 38-year-old Donald Reams of 1826 Dorothy Street in Lakeland. The two "fences" then sold the stolen goods.

According to their affidavits, Poll and Bermejo would shoplift clothing from Beall's Department and Outlet stores in the Lakeland area by concealing the items within large purses, commonly known as "booster bags," that they carried.

Detectives learned that the two women would either pawn the stolen items themselves, or they would meet with Carvajal or Reams and give them the stolen items. Carvajal and Reams, who worked independently of each other, would in turn sell the stolen items.

Poll and Bermejo would also take stolen items back to the stores from where they stole them and obtain merchandise gift cards, redeemable only within those stores. They gave these cards to Carvajal, and he in turn would sell them on the internet for less than their face value. The women also told detectives that Carvajal or Reams would give them "shopping lists" of items to steal, such as women and children's clothing, before they went into the stores.

The two women admitted to stealing from such stores as Beall's Department Store, Beall's Outlet Store, Big Lots, and Lowes.

On Friday, February 4, 2011, detectives from PCSO and LPD served search warrants at Poll's and Bermejo's residences, and placed both women under arrest. The



detectives, working with Plant City Police and the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, then arranged for the two suspects to meet with their "fence," Salvador Carvajal, near the county line between Polk in Hillsborough Counties, due to the fact that he lives in Plant City. After witnessing Carvajal make a deal with the women to purchase what he

knew to be stolen or fraudulently obtained merchandise gift cards, detectives placed Carvajal under arrest.

Poll and Bermejo were booked into the Polk County Jail and charged with Organized Retail Theft. Their bonds have each been set at \$20,000, and they both remain in jail at this time. Carvajal was booked into the Polk County Jail and charged with Grand Theft and Dealing in Stolen Property. He has bonded out of jail. Reams was booked into the Polk County Jail and charged with Grand Theft, Possession of Cannabis, and Possession of Paraphernalia. He has bonded out of jail.

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