



For Immediate Release:

Friday, May 27, 2022

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Florida Police Chiefs Association Applauds Governor DeSantis and the Florida Legislature for Enactment of HB 689

Tallahassee, Fla. – The Florida Police Chiefs Association (FPCA) today applauded Governor Ron DeSantis and the Florida Legislature for the passage and enactment of House Bill (HB) 689.

"The Florida Police Chiefs Association applauds Governor DeSantis and the entire Florida Legislature for expanding the opportunity for first responders to report and receive treatment for the symptoms and diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)," said FPCA President and Daytona Beach Shores Public Safety Department Director Stephan Dembinsky.

Said Dembinsky, "We especially want to recognize Senate President Wilton Simpson and President-designate Kathleen Passidomo, House Speaker Chris Spowls and Speaker-designate Paul Renner, bill sponsors Senators Danny Burgess and Jen Bradley, Representatives Mike Giallombardo and Jason Fischer, and Representative Tom Leek for their leadership and commitment."

"We also want to thank the Florida Fire Chiefs Association, the Florida Professional Firefighters, the Florida Police Benevolent Association, and the Fraternal Order of

Police for standing side by side as we worked together to pass this important legislation,” said FPCA Executive Director Jennifer “Cookie” Pritt.

In 2018, the Florida legislature passed a law recognizing PTSD as an occupational disease, so that first responders could qualify to receive workers’ compensation benefits like mental health treatment and lost wages, but the law required reporting PTSD symptoms within 52 weeks of witnessing a death-related event. PTSD doesn't always manifest within a year, and first responders were falling through the cracks.

"Florida’s first responders should not have to suffer through the stigma and debilitating conditions of PTSD and dig to find the courage to report and seek treatment, only to discover they were too late and don’t qualify for treatment," said Representative Mike Giallombardo. "HB 689 helps address the growing crisis of depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicide in the ranks of law enforcement officers by giving them more time to seek and receive potentially life-changing treatment."

About the Florida Police Chiefs Association

The Florida Police Chiefs Association (FPCA) is the nation's pre-eminent law enforcement professional association, speaking for more than 1,000 of Florida's top law enforcement executives, and providing guidance and leadership for the future of law enforcement and our communities. The FPCA serves municipal, airport, college and university, and tribal police departments, as well as private businesses and security firms and federal, state and county law enforcement agencies across every region of the state. For more information about the FPCA, please visit www.fpca.com.

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