



FSA LEGISLATIVE REPORT 2025

One of the primary roles and responsibilities of the Florida Sheriffs Association is to support and monitor legislation that ensures public safety. During the 2025 legislative session, FSA's legislative team actively worked with lawmakers to ensure the bills that passed are in the best interest of Florida citizens' safety and Florida's law enforcement officers.





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Executive Summary

They say good things come to those who wait—and this year’s legislative session proved it. After 105 days, the Florida Legislature fulfilled its constitutional duty by passing a \$115.1 billion state budget. What was expected to be a 60-day session stretched into the longest in recent history, wrapping up six weeks after the original May 2nd deadline. Florida’s sheriffs remained engaged and focused throughout, and their persistence paid off. Working closely with legislative partners, the sheriffs successfully advanced key public safety priorities. Despite the delays, this session delivered meaningful victories for the sheriffs. In the end, patience and perseverance led to results that will strengthen public safety across the state.

Public Safety Successes

Protecting Florida’s Children

A top priority for the sheriffs carried over from 2024 and has been signed into law by Governor DeSantis. HB 777 by Representative Rachel Plakon and Senator Jay Collins increases the penalty for luring or attempting to lure a child under 14 for unlawful purposes. By elevating the crime to a felony, the new law allows officers to obtain search warrants — something previously not possible when the offense was only a misdemeanor. This commonsense, bipartisan reform gives law enforcement the tools they need to stop predators before they harm a child.

Reinforcing Law Enforcement’s Ability to Solve Cases

Midway through the legislative session, a court ruling held that a search warrant for electronic devices was stale because it had been executed more than 10 days after being issued. Recognizing the potential impact on digital evidence cases statewide, Florida’s sheriffs moved quickly. Working with Representative Danny Nix and Senator Jay Collins, a solution was adopted as an amendment to HB 1371. The bill extends the return period for search warrants involving computers and other digital devices from 10 to 45 days. With digital forensics units facing increasing caseloads and technical complexities, this change ensures agencies have the time needed to conduct thorough and lawful searches.

HB 1371 also corrected a burdensome mandate from 2023 that required law enforcement to report missing persons cases to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) within two hours of a missing persons report being filed. The new law extends that timeframe to 90 days, allowing law enforcement to focus their efforts on the initial stages of an investigation while preserving NamUs’ purpose – solving long-term missing persons cases.

Try Again Next Year

Xylazine

Florida’s sheriffs continue to lead the fight against the opioid epidemic, and while progress has been made, new threats are emerging. Xylazine—known on the street as “tranq”—is a powerful sedative used by veterinarians that is now being trafficked illegally across the state. When combined with opioids like fentanyl, xylazine becomes particularly lethal, as it is resistant to opioid antagonists such as naloxone.



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Under current law, individuals caught with xylazine—even in large amounts—can only be charged with simple possession. Florida law must be updated to include xylazine in the drug trafficking statute, giving law enforcement and prosecutors the tools to hold traffickers accountable. The sheriffs will prioritize this legislation in 2026 to ensure Florida’s drug trafficking laws reflect the realities of today’s overdose crisis.

Jason Raynor Act

In 2021, Officer Jason Raynor was shot and killed by Othal Wallace while investigating a possible stolen vehicle. Wallace refused to comply during questioning and shot and killed Officer Raynor, later claiming self-defense based on the alleged unlawfulness of Officer Raynor’s actions. Although convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to 30 years, Wallace avoided a life sentence because current law does not enhance penalties for manslaughter of a law enforcement officer.

Under Florida law, a person may not use violence to resist a law enforcement officer in an arrest or detention. However, ambiguities around an officer’s “legal duty” have been used by defendants such as Wallace to justify force. This legislation would have clarified that resisting an officer with violence is unlawful when the officer is performing his or her official duties and would have placed the burden of who was at fault during a police interaction fully in the hands of the court. It also proposed a mandatory life sentence for anyone convicted of manslaughter against an officer.

Florida’s sheriffs and their public safety partners are united in their commitment to passing this bill—ensuring justice and accountability for those who harm law enforcement officers.

Key Budget Victories

Funding for Fiscally Constrained Sheriffs Offices

This year, funding for the 29 fiscally constrained sheriffs to provide pay raises for their deputies and correctional officers was increase by \$5 million for a total of \$25.9 million. The funding is recurring and will be administered by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. These funds support recruitment and retention efforts in the 29 sheriff’s offices most in need, helping to attract and keep dedicated deputies and correctional officers.

Florida Sheriffs Youth Learning Center

For the second year in a row, the Legislature invested in the creation of the Florida Sheriffs Youth Learning Center, appropriating another \$5 million towards the project this year. With \$15 million in state funding now secured, FSA will seek the final round of funding during the 2026 session.

Once complete, the Youth Learning Center will celebrate over 200 years of sheriff history and serve as an educational hub where children can learn about law enforcement through immersive exhibits, videos, and



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In July, sheriffs, community leaders, and state officials gathered for a successful groundbreaking ceremony, marking the official start of construction of the Florida Sheriffs Youth Learning Center.

hands-on activities. The Youth Learning Center will introduce students to careers such as a law enforcement officer, correctional deputy, dispatcher and civilian roles within a sheriff's office.

Conclusion

The 2025 legislative session may be remembered for its delays, but it should be defined by its outcomes. Florida's sheriffs remained steadfast in advancing priorities that protect our communities and strengthen public safety. With purpose, unity, and determination, the sheriffs delivered meaningful outcomes for the citizens of Florida. This session will be remembered not just for its length, but for the lasting impact it made.



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Florida Sheriffs Association Priorities

Issue: Luring or Enticing Minors
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-132
Effective: October 1, 2025.

(HB 777 Rep. Plakon and SB 1136 Sen. Collins)

The bill amends s. 787.025, the luring statute, to increase the penalty from a misdemeanor to a felony for an adult who intentionally lures or entices or attempts to lure or entice a child under the age of 14 into or out of a structure, conveyance, or dwelling, other than for a lawful purpose.

This legislation also increases the criminal penalties for repeat offenders from:

- A third-degree felony to a second-degree felony for a second or subsequent offense.
- A third-degree felony to a second-degree felony, if the offender has been previously convicted of a violation relating to sexual battery, lewd or lascivious offenses committed on or in the presence of persons less than 16 years of age or lewd or lascivious exhibition using a computer.

Additionally, the bill prohibits the following from being raised as a defense in a prosecution for any violation of ch. 787, F.S., relating to kidnapping, false imprisonment, luring or enticing a child, interference with custody, removing minors from the state or concealing minors contrary to state agency order or court order, human trafficking, and human smuggling, when the victim's age is an element of the offense. Ignorance of the victims age, misrepresentation of a victim's age by any person or a bona fide belief that a victim is over a specified age is also not a defense. However, the bill provides an exception for s. 787.30, F.S., relating to employment of persons in adult entertainment establishments.

Impact to Sheriffs: This legislation allows law enforcement to obtain search warrants in cases involving the intentional luring or enticing of a child for unlawful purposes. This represents an important change in the law, ensuring that law enforcement has the tools needed to intervene before a predator can commit a serious crime against a child.

Issue: Law Enforcement Officers and Other Personnel
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-179
Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 1371 Rep. Nix and SB 1444 Sen. Collins)

The bill includes a wide range of provisions to support first responders and strengthen public safety measures.

The bill addresses an issue created by a recent court [case ruling](#) that held that the warrant to search the defendant's electronic devices was stale because it was executed more than ten days after it was issued.



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The bill increases the time frame that a search warrant issued for a computer, computer system, or electronic device that is in the possession of a law enforcement agency must be returned to the court from 10 days to 45 days.

The bill also corrects an oversight in the 2023 legislation that imposed a restrictive timeline for reporting missing persons cases to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs). Previously, law enforcement agencies were required to enter cases into NamUs within two (2) hours of a report being filed and to conduct monthly reviews of all cases entered. Under the revised provisions:

- The reporting deadline to enter missing persons cases into NamUs is extended to within 90 days of the report being filed.
- Agencies are now required to conduct annual reviews of cases entered into NamUs, rather than monthly.

These changes provide agencies with more flexibility to focus investigative efforts during the initial stages of a missing persons case and alleviate administrative burdens. The current review and reporting timeframes relating to the Florida Crime Information Center and National Crime Information Center remain unchanged.



Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signs the state's budget for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. The budget includes significant investments in education, public safety, environmental protection, and transportation.



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The bill also requires first responders, sheriff's employees, or detention officers exposed to blood during official duties by an arrestee to submit a notice of exposure to the detention facility within 24 hours. If incapacitated, the agency must file the notice on their behalf. Upon receiving a notice, the detention facility must immediately test the inmate, unless the person has already been tested. The bill also requires each detention facility to update written procedures to:

- Specify the conditions that require the immediate testing of an inmate, including upon receipt of a notice of exposure.
- Require the test results from an inmate's blood test to be provided to:
 - The sheriff or chief correctional officer of the detention facility.
 - Employees or officers of the sheriff or chief correctional officer who are responsible for the care and custody of the affected inmate.
 - Any employees, officers, or first responders who provided a notice of exposure to the detention facility.

The bill also makes several changes related to law enforcement officers and other personnel, including:

- Authorizes a first responder who has a physical disability resulting from an amputation to continue to serve as a first responder if he or she meets the applicable first responder certification requirements without an accommodation.
- Creates the Florida Medal of Valor and the Florida Blue/Red Heart Medal.
- Makes the use of vehicle kill switches a second-degree misdemeanor, unless used by the owner of the vehicle or a law enforcement officer to prevent the commission of a felony.
- Requires a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment of 25 years if a person is convicted of committing attempted first-degree murder of certain justice system personnel.
- Encourages a pro-prosecution policy if a person is arrested for making a false report of a crime.
- Prohibits a person from depriving specified officers of digital recording devices or restraints and prohibiting a person from rendering such officers' weapons, radios, digital recording devices, or restraints useless.
- Creates the Critical Infrastructure Mapping Grant Program within FDLE to support the ongoing assessment of the state's vulnerability to, and ability to recover from, acts of terrorism. Funding is available to the state, or any law enforcement agency, county, municipality or other political subdivision, or any agent of such governmental entities to map critical infrastructure, public gathering places, places of worship, and any other location for which a map would be deemed of high value for facilitating an emergency response.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill introduces several provisions that sheriffs should be aware of, particularly those affecting investigative procedures, jail operations, and the handling of missing persons cases. The extended 45-day timeframe will give digital forensics units critical flexibility, addressing challenges posed by rising caseloads and complex technology. The change ensures law enforcement has adequate time for thorough, lawful searches.



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Additionally, law enforcement agencies will now have up to **90 days** after a missing persons report is filed to enter the case into NamUs. This change will allow officers to prioritize ongoing investigations and ease the strain on NamUs from the large influx of short-term cases. The current backlog of short-term cases in Florida has limited NamUs' ability to support long-term missing persons cases. This change in law will ensure law enforcement can utilize the NamUs for solving cold cases.

Lastly, sheriffs should be aware of the new requirements in instances where an officer is exposed to the blood of an arrestee. Sheriffs overseeing jails may need to update existing written procedures for the timely and appropriate testing of inmates in such cases.

Issue: **School Safety**
Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-58**
Effective: *July 1, 2025.*

(HB 1403 Rep. Yeager and SB 1470 Sen. Burgess)

The bill expands the Guardian Program, clarifies perimeter and door security requirements, modifies training and oversight for school security guards, and refines procedures for threat assessment and emergency response. The provisions relating to school security guards and child care facilities include several provisions impacting sheriffs, including requirements relating to training and reporting.

School Security Guards

The bill aligns the training, certification, reporting requirements and oversight of school security guards with requirements for school guardians.

Current law requires sheriffs to assist district school boards, charter school governing boards, and private schools in exercising options for safe-school officers. Each sheriff must provide access to the Guardian Program to aid in the prevention or abatement of active assailant incidents on school premises. Meaning, if a local school board has voted to implement a guardian program the sheriff must establish a program to provide training for school guardians or find a neighboring sheriff who has a program to conduct the training. **The bill expands that requirement and provides that sheriffs shall also provide security guard training – both initial and ongoing and must maintain training, certification, and firearm qualification records for each guard the sheriff certifies. All costs related to training and screening must be covered by the security agency that employs the guards, and the sheriff may not waive these expenses.**

Additionally, the sheriff of each county in which the school security guard will be assigned to a school must first approve the school security guard to work in a county before the security guard can begin working at any school in the county. The sheriff's approval authorizes the guard to work at any school in that county. Just like school guardians, school security guards must satisfy the background screening, psychological evaluation, and drug testing requirements prior to training. Additionally, the sheriff must report to the FDLE both the school security guards they certify within 30 days of certification and a quarterly schedule of upcoming school security guard trainings.



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Child Care Facilities

The bill allows Florida's licensed child care facilities to participate in the Guardian Program to the same extent as a private school. Child care facilities must verify that guardians meet the statutory requirements as well as report guardian information to the FDLE. In counties where the sheriff does not operate a Guardian Program, child care facilities may have their guardians trained in another county. Additionally, a child care facility that establishes a guardian program must pay the full cost implementing such a program but the sheriff that provides the guardian training may waive the training costs. Child care facilities may also employ school security guards, so long as they comply with certain reporting requirements.

Other Provisions Impacting School Safety

Clarifications to Locked Campus and Access Requirements

The bill clarifies and modifies school perimeter and door security requirements that were implemented in 2024. It limits the application of perimeter, locked access, and door security requirements to the period beginning 30 minutes before the school day and ending 30 minutes after. The bill allows doors or gates to remain unlocked if a locked barrier separates them from student-occupied areas. Exemptions are provided for career and technical education spaces where locking doors poses health or safety risks and for common areas like cafeterias and media centers, except during instructional time or testing.

Panic Alert and Digital Mapping System Integration

An appropriation was included in the state budget for the Department of Education (DOE), in cooperation with the Department of Management Services, to identify a centralized system for use by all public safety answering point infrastructure which can receive alerts from all panic alert systems and integrate digital maps used by public schools, charter schools, and other educational institutions.

Florida Institute of School Safety Workgroup

The bill directs the Office of Safe Schools (OSS) to convene a stakeholder workgroup to develop recommendations for the creation of a Florida Institute of School Safety. The workgroup must include law enforcement, school personnel, mental health professionals, and other experts. The OSS must submit its recommendations to the Governor and Legislature by January 1, 2026.



Florida Sheriffs Association President Sheriff Bill Prummell and FSA Executive Director Matt Dunagan presented Senator Alexis Calatayud with the Friend of the Sheriff Award for her tremendous work on school safety during the 2024 legislative session.



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Temporary Door Lock Use During Active Assailant Incidents

The bill allows the use of temporary door locks in classrooms that already have permanently installed locks during active assailant incidents so long as they comply with the Florida Fire Prevention Code and are included in the school's active assailant response plan.

Impact to Sheriffs: Sheriffs should be aware of the new training and reporting requirements related to school security guards as described above. Sheriffs may still contract with another sheriff's office to provide guardian training if they do not operate a Guardian Program.

Issue: Access to the Mental Competency (MECOM) Database
Outcome: Failed.

(HB 1355 Rep. Maney and SB 1494 Sen. Rodriguez)

The bill would have provided local law enforcement with access to the Mental Competency (MECOM) Database to determine the eligibility of a citizen who carries a concealed weapon or firearm without possessing a Concealed Weapons License, which is no longer required under Florida law.

Issue: Xylazine
Outcome: Failed. Died in returning messages.

(HB 57 Rep. Plakon and SB 1360 Sen. Leek)

The bill would have amended s. 893.13, F.S., to provide that it is a first-degree felony, with a mandatory minimum prison term of three years for selling, manufacturing, delivering, or possessing with the intent to sell, manufacture, or deliver xylazine. Additionally, the bill would have added xylazine to the trafficking statute, making it a first-degree felony for trafficking in xylazine.

Law Enforcement

Issue: Electronic Transmittal of Court Orders
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-10
Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 513 Rep. Gentry and SB 774 Sen. Wright)

Currently, the clerk of the court must transmit the court order, petition, and notice of hearing related to a risk protection order to the sheriff on or before the next business day. There is no statutorily defined timeframe for when the clerk must transmit the operative paperwork related to the Baker Act and the Marchman Act to the sheriff.

The bill requires the clerk of court to electronically deliver to the sheriff certain court orders requiring prompt attention by the sheriff for the sake of public safety. The clerk is required to complete the task within 6 hours after a judge signs an order. The orders requiring prompt delivery are orders to detain an individual for an involuntary mental health examination, orders to detain an individual for involuntary



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substance abuse evaluation, and orders to take possession of firearms and ammunition from an individual pursuant to a risk protection order.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will ensure that these time sensitive orders are quickly transmitted to the sheriff before the next day without an exception for nights, weekends, holidays or natural disasters.



The Florida Sheriffs gathered in Tallahassee for the annual Florida Sheriffs Day at the Capitol.

Issue: Peer Support for First Responders
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-9
Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 421 Sen. Maggard and SB 86 Sen. Burgess)

The bill amends s. 111.09, F.S., relating to peer support for first responders, to include support personnel as defined in s. 943.10(11), F.S., who are involved in investigating a crime scene or collecting or processing evidence in the definition of first responder for the purposes of peer support eligibility.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will make employees who investigate crime scenes and process evidence eligible for peer support services.



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Issue: Property Rights

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-112

Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 213 Rep. Gossett-Seidman and SB 322 Sen. Rodriguez)

The bill creates a nonjudicial procedure for a property owner to request that the county sheriff immediately remove an unauthorized person from commercial real property. The procedures in the bill are similar to procedures enacted during the 2024 Legislative Session for the removal of an unauthorized person from a *residential* dwelling.

Under the bill, an owner of *commercial* property may request the sheriff remove an unauthorized person from the owner's property. An owner must contact the sheriff and file a complaint under penalty of perjury listing the relevant facts that show eligibility for relief. The complaint form is similar to the form currently used by sheriff's offices for residential property and **can be found in the [bill](#) beginning on page 6**. Additionally, the bill expands crimes relating to unlawfully occupying a residential dwelling or fraudulently advertising residential property for sale or lease to include commercial properties.

Lastly, the bill also amends that 2024 enactment to add an express grant of authority to a sheriff to use reasonably necessary force to enter a property.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill may give law enforcement an additional tool to quickly remove squatters on commercial property. However, deputies may still trespass a person unlawfully on commercial property. The bill may also discourage unlawful activities by increasing penalties for property damage and preventing fake property listings.

Issue: Concealed Carry Licensing Requirements for Law Enforcement Officers, Correctional Officers, and Military Servicemembers

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-120

Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 383 Rep. Holcomb and SB 490 Sen. Collins)

The bill defines a "holder of a concealed weapons or concealed firearms license" to include law enforcement officers, correctional officers, correctional probation officers, and servicemembers and thus exempts such officers and servicemembers from the mandatory three-day waiting period between the retail purchase and delivery of a firearm. The bill also allows correctional probation officers to carry concealed firearms off-duty at the discretion of their superiors and to perform law enforcement functions.

Impact to Sheriffs: A law enforcement officer, correctional officer, correctional probation officer, or servicemember who purchases a firearm at retail from a federal firearms licensee will now be allowed to take immediate possession of the firearm following a successful background check.



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Issue: Restrictions on Firearms and Ammunition During Emergencies

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-103

Effective: Took effect upon the Governor's signature on May 28, 2025.

(HB 6025 Rep. Miller and SB 952 Sen. Ingoglia)

The bill repeals s. 870.044, F.S., thereby ending the automatic prohibition against the sale, or display for sale, of firearms or ammunition and the intentional possession of firearms or ammunition in a public place during a local state of emergency arising from a threat of violence or public disorder. The bill also repeals a provision providing that nothing in ch. 870, F.S., shall be construed to authorize the seizure, taking, or confiscation of firearms that are lawfully possessed, unless a person is engaged in a criminal act.

Impact to Sheriffs: Sheriffs may still declare local emergencies pursuant to s. 870.043, F.S. related to riots or public disorder within a county so long as the Governor has not declared a state of emergency. Sheriffs will also still have the ability to order certain discretionary emergency measures under s. 870.045 such as curfews, the prohibition of the sale of alcohol and possession of gasoline in public places, among other measures. However, there will no longer be an *automatic* prohibition on the sale of guns and ammunition and possession of those in public places during a locally declared emergency in response to a riot.





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Issue: **Anchoring Limitation Areas**
Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-39**
Effective: *Took effect upon the Governor's signature on May 19, 2025.*

(HB 481 Rep. Lopez and SB 866 Sen. Martin)

The bill authorizes counties with more than 1.5 million people — currently Miami-Dade, Broward, Hillsborough, and Palm Beach—to limit boats from anchoring overnight for more than 30 days in a six-month period. These counties may now regulate vessels anchored for at least one hour between one-half hour after sunset and one-half hour before sunrise, if the vessel remains within county waters for more than 30 days in a six-month period. This does not apply to vessels anchored overnight within marked mooring fields or those anchored for permitted marine construction, installation, or maintenance. The bill also increases from 100 feet to 300 feet, the distance from the marked boundary of a public mooring field within which a vessel may not anchor or moor.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will allow local governments in Miami-Dade, Broward, Hillsborough, and Palm Beach counties to establish stricter anchoring zones in heavily impacted areas.

Issue: **Vessel Accountability**
Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-147**
Effective: *July 1, 2025.*

(HB 1149 Rep. Basabe and SB 164 Sen. Rodriguez)

The bill implements measures to prevent and address the presence of derelict and at-risk vessels in Florida's waters, strengthen enforcement authority, and enhance long-term anchoring regulations. Under the bill, law enforcement may require an immediate propulsion test for vessels at risk of becoming derelict if the owner or operator is present. Otherwise, the test must occur within 48 hours of notice in the officer's presence. A vessel deemed at risk three times (3) in 24 months is declared a public nuisance and may be removed or disposed of by FWC or law enforcement. Officers are not liable for damages unless due to gross negligence or willful misconduct.

The bill increases penalties for leaving a derelict vessel in state waters for over 24 hours. The first offense remains a first-degree misdemeanor; a second offense becomes a third-degree felony; and third or subsequent offenses are second-degree felonies. The bill makes it a first-degree misdemeanor to reside on a vessel deemed derelict by a court or administrative order. Law enforcement is authorized to investigate, issue orders, file reports, and make arrests to enforce this provision and FWC may adopt implementing rules. The bill also expands the FWC's existing local government grant program to support the derelict vessel prevention and voluntary turn-in program.

Beginning January 1, 2026, vessel owners or operators must obtain a no-cost permit for long-term anchoring—defined as anchoring within one nautical mile of a designated point for 14 or more days in a 30-day period. Violations are punishable by fines up to \$500.



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Impact to Sheriffs: Coastal sheriffs will have greater authority in managing derelict and at-risk vessels. Additionally, by introducing criminal penalties, the bill will deter vessel owners from leaving derelict vessels in state waters, promoting better compliance and protection of Florida's waterways.

Issue: **Disposition of Migrant Vessels**

Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-34**

Effective: *July 1, 2025.*

(HB 1285 Rep. Mooney and SB 830 Sen. Rodriguez)

The bill prohibits the abandonment of migrant vessels used for undocumented transport in Florida waters, authorizes funding for their removal, and establishes a process for law enforcement to remove and dispose of those left on public property. Under the bill, migrant vessels may not remain in Florida waters for more than 24 hours and must be removed from public property within five (5) days of a law enforcement notice. If not removed within that time, law enforcement is authorized to remove and dispose of the vessel. The bill also authorizes the use of state funds and federal disaster funds to support the removal of these vessels.

Impact to Sheriffs: When a law enforcement officer determines that a migrant vessel is on public property and cannot be easily removed, the officer must post a notice on the vessel in accordance with existing laws for abandoned or lost property, excluding derelict vessels or those declared public nuisances. A law enforcement agency or its designee may remove, destroy, or dispose of the vessel, or authorize another government entity to carry out the action.

Issue: **Vessels ("Boater Freedom Act")**

Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-35**

Effective: *July 1, 2025.*

(SB 1388 Sen. Trumbull)

The bill prohibits a law enforcement officer from boarding or stopping a vessel without probable cause that a violation of vessel safety laws has occurred or is occurring, regardless of whether the owner or operator of the vessel is on board. The bill also directs the FWC and the FLDHSMV to create a "Florida Freedom Boater" safety inspection decal, issued upon verification of compliance with safety equipment requirements.

Impact to Sheriffs: Sheriffs with marine units should note that under the new law, deputies may no longer stop or board a vessel solely to conduct a safety or marine sanitation equipment inspection. Such violations are now classified as secondary offenses and cannot be the sole reason for a stop.

Issue: **Assault or Battery on a Utility Worker**

Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-73**

Effective: *October 1, 2025.*



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(HB 857 Rep. Kincart Johnson and SB 1386 Sen. Yarborough)

The bill includes utility workers as a specified type of personnel for which an assault or battery offense is reclassified to the next highest penalty when such an offense is knowingly committed against a utility worker while he or she is engaged in work on critical infrastructure.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will help ensure utility workers can perform their duties safely and without interference, particularly while repairing and maintaining critical infrastructure during routine operations and in response to disasters or widespread power outages.

Issue: **Public Lodging and Food Service Establishments**

Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-113**

Effective: *July 1, 2025.*

(HB 535 Rep. Johnson and SB 606 Sen. Leek)

The bill clarifies when guests who have not paid their bills may be removed from public lodging establishments. Current law is open to interpretation in some cases, making it difficult for hotels to remove non-paying guests who claim the hotel is their sole residence without going through the lengthy eviction process. The bill simplifies and clarifies the definitions of transient and nontransient occupancy, helping both lodging operators and guests understand the distinction between being a guest and being a tenant.

Under the bill, a *transient public lodging establishment* is any unit or building rented to guests more than three (3) times in a calendar year for less than 30 consecutive days or advertised as such as a place regularly rented to guests for such short-term rentals. A *nontransient public lodging establishment* means any building rented for at least 30 consecutive days or advertised as regularly rented for that duration. The bill removes the condition that the status of an establishment as transient or nontransient depends on the parties' intent about whether the guest's stay will be temporary. It also eliminates the rebuttable presumption that a guest's occupancy status is based on the operator's intent about whether the unit is the guest's sole residence.

Under the bill, a **transient establishment** means occupancy that is temporary. The bill removes the condition that the transient occupancy is temporary when it is in the intention of the parties that it is temporary. The term includes the occupancy of a dwelling unit at a hotel, motel, vacation rental, bed and breakfast inn, or timeshare project, unless a written rental or lease agreement expressly states that the dwelling is the sole residence of the guest. A **nontransient establishment** means occupancy that is not temporary. The bill removes the condition that the nontransient occupancy is not temporary when it is in the intention of the parties that it is not temporary. However, hotels, motels, vacation rentals, bed and breakfast inns, or timeshare projects may only be considered nontransient occupancies if there is a written rental or lease agreement stating the unit is the sole residence of the guest.

The bill also requires written notice—via text, email, or printed paper—when a public lodging establishment tells a guest to leave for failing to check out or pay by the required time. The notice is



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effective upon delivery, whether in person, by phone, or email using the guest's contact information, or delivered directly to the guest's unit. Lastly, the bill allows, as opposed to requiring, a law enforcement officers to arrest a guest who refuses to leave after being notified.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill aims to clarify the distinction between tenants and guests under Florida law, providing greater transparency for both hotels and guests. This clarity may also assist law enforcement when a hotel requests the removal of a guest for failing to pay or check out. Additionally, the bill removes the requirement for a law enforcement officer to arrest a guest who refuses to leave an establishment and instead requires the officer to "remove" the guest from the establishment.

Issue: Law Enforcement, Correctional, and Correctional Probation Officer Benefits ("Deputy Andy Lahera Act")

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-131

Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 751 Rep. Sapp and SB 1160 Sen. Leek)

The bill closes a current loophole in the law to allow medical benefits for law enforcement officers who are catastrophically injured on the job. Previously, the law required the employer of a full-time criminal justice officer who was catastrophically injured in the line of duty from responding to fresh pursuit, an emergency, or an unlawful act committed by another to pay the full premium of the employer's health insurance plan for the injured officer, their spouse, and dependent children. The bill expands employer-paid health insurance benefits to cover law enforcement, correctional, and correctional probation officers who suffer catastrophic injuries during an **official training exercise** or in the line of duty.

Impact to Sheriffs: Sheriffs will be responsible for covering the full premium for deputies catastrophically injured in the line of duty or during an official training exercise. The coverage extends to the injured officer, their spouse, and dependent children. Additionally, under the bill, "catastrophic injury" is defined in s. 440.02, F.S. **2002**. As such, to determine what is considered a catastrophic injury for purposes to the bill, sheriff's offices will need to reference the 2002 statute which can be found [here](#).

Issue: Expedited DNA Testing Grant Program

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-141

Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 847 Johnson and SB 1072 McClain)

The bill establishes the Expedited DNA Grant Program within FDLE to provide funding for sheriff's offices and police departments to process DNA samples at private labs. This applies when the required technology or technique is unavailable at local or state labs, or if the law enforcement agency determines that expedited testing is necessary to advance an investigation. *However, because the bill does not appropriate funds for the grant program, law enforcement agencies cannot currently utilize the program.*



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Impact to Sheriffs: If funding is appropriated in next year's state budget, sheriff's offices will be able to utilize the program to cover expenses for processing DNA samples at private labs.

Issue: Department of Law Enforcement (Retired Police Canines Reimbursement)

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-83

Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 1053 Plakon and SB 1268 Truenow)

Raises the maximum annual reimbursement for retired police dogs' veterinary costs.

Impact to Sheriffs: The law will positively impact handlers or adopters of retired police dogs who participate in the Care for Retired Police Dogs Program as it increases the maximum amount of reimbursement that a handler or adopter may request annually for the cost of the dog's veterinary care from \$1,500 to \$5,000.

Issue: Arrest and Detention of Individuals with Significant Medical Conditions

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-64

Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 1099 Rep. Canady and SB 1450 Sen. Burgess)

The bill allows law enforcement officers to use their discretion—based on the totality of the circumstances—when deciding whether to immediately arrest a person with a significant medical condition, including an arrest for an offense committed against an elderly person or disabled adult. The bill defines "a person with a significant medical condition" as a person who is a patient or resident of a hospital, nursing home or assisted living facility. In making the determination of whether to arrest such a person, a law enforcement officer may consider whether the person to be arrested is a current or continued threat to public safety or himself or herself or a flight risk and may consider all available methods of making an arrest.

Impact to Sheriffs: This bill will provide deputies with greater flexibility when handling arrests involving individuals with significant medical conditions, including situations involving elderly victims.

Issue: Feasibility Study Relating to Statewide Pawn Data Database

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-43

Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 1359 Michael and SB 1252 Yarborough)

Requires FDLE to conduct a feasibility study for a statewide pawn data database and report to the Legislature. The study must be completed by January 1, 2026.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will serve as an initial step towards developing a statewide pawn database that will assist law enforcement in tracking pawn data more effectively.



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Governor Ron DeSantis announces recruitment bonuses to new law enforcement at the Marion County Sheriff's Office as part of the Florida Law Enforcement Recruitment Bonus Payment Program.

Issue: **Fleeing or Attempting to Elude a Law Enforcement Officer**
Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-75**
Effective: **October 1, 2025.**

(HB 113 Rep. Chamberlin and SB 468 Sen. Collins)

The bill enhances criminal penalties for the offenses of fleeing or attempting to elude a law enforcement officer. Specifically, the bill increases the ranking for specified fleeing or attempting to elude offenses on the offense severity ranking chart (OSRC) of the Criminal Punishment Code, as follows:

- Fleeing or attempting to elude a law enforcement officer in a patrol vehicle with siren and lights activated, while driving at high speed or with wanton disregard for safety, from a Level 4 to a Level 5 offense; and
- Aggravated fleeing or attempting to elude when leaving the scene of a crash and causing injury to a person or damage to property, from a Level 5 to a Level 6 offense.

The bill also creates a sentencing multiplier for second or subsequent fleeing or attempting to elude offense. Under the multiplier, a convicted defendant's subtotal sentencing points are multiplied by 1.5 if the primary offense is fleeing or attempting to elude a law enforcement officer or aggravated fleeing or eluding, and there is one or more prior violation for fleeing or attempting to elude in the offender's record.



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Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will create harsher penalties for drivers that engage in high-speed pursuits from law enforcement, helping to dissuade drivers from engaging in these dangerous chases.

Issue: **Animal Cruelty During a Declared State of Emergency**

Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-101**

Effective: **October 1, 2025.**

(HB 205 Rep. Griffitts and SB 150 Sen. Gaetz)

Establishes abandoning a restrained dog during a natural disaster as a felony of the third-degree, punishable by a fine of up to five (5) years in prison, or by a fine of up to \$10,000, or both.

Impact to Sheriffs: This bill will allow law enforcement to go after individuals who restrain and abandon dogs outdoors during a natural disaster.



Governor Ron DeSantis signs two significant animal rights bills, Dexter's Law and Trooper's Law at Big Dog Ranch Rescue in Loxahatchee.

Issue: **Aggravated Animal Cruelty (Dexter's Law)**

Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-102**

Effective: **July 1, 2025.**

(HB 255 Rep. Weinberger and SB 494 Sen. Leek)

The bill requires the FDLE to post on its website the names of individuals who have been convicted of animal cruelty by January 1, 2026. It also creates a sentencing point multiplier of 1.25 for the crime of aggravated animal cruelty when the offense involves the intentional torture or torment of an animal that resulted in injury, mutilation, or death.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will increase penalties for those who commit horrific acts of animal abuse – individuals which are likely to have a propensity for violence against human beings.



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Issue: Registration of Sexual Predators and Sexual Offenders

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-134

Effective: October 1, 2025.

(HB 1351 Rep. Baker and SB 1654 Sen. Martin)

The bill revises several provisions relating to sexual predator and sexual offender reporting requirements.

- The bill clarifies definitions of different types of residences for purposes of sexual predator and sexual offender registration and reporting requirements, including:
 - A person's **"permanent residence"** means a place where the person abides, lodges or resides for three or more consecutive days that is the person's home or other place where the person primarily lives.
 - An **"in-state travel residence"** is defined as a type of temporary residence in Florida established by a person who already has an existing permanent, temporary, or transient residence in Florida.
- A sexual predator or sexual offender must register additional information related to his or her employment through the sheriff's office, including occupation, business name, employment address, and phone number must also report any changes to employment, including the termination of existing employment. Failure to comply is a third-degree felony.
- A sexual predator who is under the supervision of DOC or DJJ must report in-person to the sheriff's office within 48 hours after any change in vehicles owned.
- If a sexual offender's place of residence is a vessel, the sexual offender must provide the information to the FDLE through the sheriff's office.
- A sexual predator or sexual offender must report the following in-person or online:
 - The creation of a new business (within 48 hours).
 - In-state travel.
 - A change in "in-state travel residence" within 48 hours after establishing the in-state travel residence.
 - Sexual predators and sexual offenders will be able to submit changes to in-state travel residences online.
- Law enforcement agencies must verify the address of a sexual predator at least four (4) times per year and verify the address of a sexual offender at least one time per calendar year.

Impact to Sheriffs: Sheriff's office may need to update existing training, policies, and procedures related to sexual predator and sexual offender reporting requirements. Additionally, sheriff's offices will need to verify sexual predators' at least four (4) times per year and sexual offenders' addresses at least once a year. The bill does not specifically require sheriff's offices to conduct in-person verification checks, and as such, sheriff's offices may conduct address verification checks via mail-outs.



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Issue: Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (Drones)

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-22

Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 651 Rep. Tuck and SB 700 Sen. Truenow)

This bill is a farming bill that is primarily aimed at amending state laws involving agriculture but also includes several provisions related to public safety and law enforcement.

Drones

The bill amends s. 330.41, F.S. to prohibit a person from knowingly or willfully allowing a drone to make contact with private property, state wildlife management lands, a sport shooting and training range, or any person or object on the premises of or within such property with the intent to harass. A first offense is a second-degree misdemeanor, and a subsequent offense is a first-degree misdemeanor. A person who commits a violation and records video of the property or any person on the property commits a first-degree misdemeanor. A subsequent offense is a third-degree felony.

Additionally, the bill prohibits a person from knowingly or willfully operating a drone on agricultural lands, allow the drone to make contact with a person or object on the land, or allow the drone to come close enough to disturb agricultural production. A first-time violation is punishable as a second-degree misdemeanor, while a subsequent violation is punishable as a first-degree misdemeanor.

The bill provides exceptions to allow the owner, a person given written permission or anyone acting in compliance with 934.50 to operate a drone over agricultural lands or private property. The bill also allows the use of drones for search and seizure purposes by a local government entity for the purpose of managing and eradicating plant or animal diseases or for other related activities.

Concealed Carry

The bill updates Florida's concealed weapon licenses process to eliminate red tape and delays for gun owners by allowing the state to issue a concealed carry license if an applicant has already demonstrated competence with firearm training in the U.S. military. The bill allows the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (department) to temporarily suspend a concealed carry license or application if the applicant is arrested or charged with a disqualifying crime until final disposition of the case. The bill also reduces the extended review period for a concealed carry applicant's criminal history screening from 90 to 45 days.

Other Changes that Impact Public Safety

- Establishes a grant program for fiscally constrained counties and areas along evacuation routes to purchase generator power switches for fuel stations.
- Creates a felony for stealing checks out of mailboxes from Florida homes and businesses.
- Enhances protections against fuel theft and payment card misuse at retail fuel stations.
- Creates strict legal worker eligibility requirements for farmworker housing and establishes penalties for violations.



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- Eliminates the existing loophole for the sale of psychedelic mushrooms by prohibiting transporting, selling or giving away spores that can produce mushrooms that contain a controlled substance. Violations are punishable as a first-degree misdemeanor.

Impact to Sheriffs: Current penalties for flying a drone over someone's property are limited to civil remedies. This law will help deter individuals by providing criminal penalties for unlawfully flying a drone over someone's property and allowing the drone to make contact with the property or a person on it or flying a drone over agricultural lands. Because the penalty is limited to a misdemeanor, law enforcement must witness violations to make an arrest. The law includes a carveout for law enforcement operating a drone under s. 934.50, F.S.

Issue: Drones

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-29

Effective: October 1, 2025.

(HB 1121 rep. Canady and SB 1422 Sen. Truenow)

This bill makes several changes related to drones and unmanned aircraft systems, separate and apart from the above-referenced bill.

The bill amends s. 330.41, F.S. to raise the penalty for flying a drone over a critical infrastructure facility from a second-degree misdemeanor to a third-degree felony and expands the definition of such facilities to include wired communications infrastructure.

The bill also amends s. 330.411, F.S., making it a third-degree felony for a person to *knowingly or willfully* possess or operates an unmanned aircraft or unmanned aircraft system with an attached weapon, firearm, explosive, destructive device, or ammunition. Additionally, the bill makes it a third-degree felony to knowingly or willfully alter a drone's hardware or software to evade FAA remote ID requirements or possess or operate such a modified drone. A person who unlawfully possesses or operates an unmanned aircraft or unmanned aircraft system that carries a weapon of mass destruction, or a hoax weapon of mass destruction, commits a first-degree felony.

Additionally, the bill expands the exceptions under s. 934.50, F.S. for which law enforcement can use a drone to include for providing or maintaining the public safety of a crowd of 50 or more people and in furtherance of providing and maintaining the security of elected officials. The bill also makes it a first-degree misdemeanor to knowingly and willfully violate s. 934.50, F.S., by using a drone to conduct surveillance on private property. Unlawfully distributing such surveillance is classified as a third-degree felony. The bill includes a carve out for state agencies, political subdivisions or an officer or employee acting in the course and scope of his or her employment.

Impact to Sheriffs: This bill increases penalties for the unlawful use of drones. It also expands law enforcement's authority to deploy drones for crowd safety and the protection of elected officials. By making it a criminal offense—rather than a civil violation—to intentionally use a drone to capture images



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or video over private property, the bill will help deter invasions of privacy. Because this offense is classified as a misdemeanor, law enforcement must witness the act to make an arrest. However, the unlawful distribution of such images is a felony, allowing law enforcement to arrest individuals based on evidence of distribution.

Law Enforcement Bills that Failed:

Issue: Jason Raynor Act

Outcome: Failed. Died in returning messages.

(HB 175 Rep. Baker and SB 234 Sen. Leek)

The bill would have gone a long way towards addressing the legal issues that were brought to light during the trial of Othal Wallace in the murder of Officer Jason Raynor in 2021. The legislation would have expanded law enforcement officers' protection from a citizen's use or threatened use of force during an arrest or detention and would have put burden of who was at fault during a police interaction fully in the hands of the court. The bill would have also clarified that a person cannot resist an officer with violence or the threat of violence when an officer is acting in the performance of his or her official duties. Because current law does not include an enhanced penalty for manslaughter involving law enforcement, the bill would have addressed this gap by adding manslaughter to the list of offenses requiring a life sentence without eligibility for release upon conviction when committed against a law enforcement officer.

Issue: Complaints Against Law Enforcement and Correctional Officers

Outcome: Failed. Died in committee.

(HB 317 Rep. Fabricio and SB 516 Sen. Collins)

This bill would have required all complaints against law enforcement officers to be in writing and signed by the complainant under oath. This would have precluded any investigation into officer misconduct where a complainant is unwilling to do so, regardless of the seriousness of the alleged misconduct or the number of previously sustained violations for the same misconduct. The bill would have also prevented an agency from documenting in an officer's personnel file any outcome other than a sustained policy or regulation violation as defined by agency policy.

Issue: Public Records/Crime Victims (Marsy's Law)

Outcome: Failed. Died in committee.

(HB 1129 Weinberger and SB 1266 Gruters)

The bill would have expanded public record exemptions for crime victims to include personal identification information and records that could be used to locate, intimidate, harass, or abuse them. It also would have provided confidentiality for law enforcement officers involved in use of force incidents for 72 hours. The bill would have also allowed the head of the law enforcement agency to extend the exemption beyond the 72-hour period if he or she determines its necessary.



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Issue: Impounding Motor Vehicles

Outcome: Failed. Died in committee.

(HB 779 Rep. Bankson and SB 1824 Sen. Martin)

The bill would have established procedures for impounding vehicles involved in fleeing or eluding law enforcement. The bill specified conditions under which the impounded vehicle could be released, such as where the vehicle was stolen or in the care of another person at the time of the violation.

Issue: Fines for Public Nuisance and Abatement

Outcome: Failed. Died in committee.

(HB 1343 Rep. Booth and SB 1022 Sen. Wright)

The bill would have increased the maximum fine a county or municipality may assess for a public nuisance activity to \$500 per day if the activity is not abated within one year.

Issue: Autism Spectrum Disorder Training for Law Enforcement Officers

Outcome: Failed. Died in committee.

(HB 1273 Rep. Stark and SB 1364 Sen. Collins)

The bill would have required new and existing law enforcement officers to complete a training component relating to individuals with autism.

Issue: Use of Artificial Intelligence to Detect Firearms

Outcome: Failed. Died in committee.

(HB 491 Rep. Miller and SB 562 Sen. Ingoglia)

This bill would have prohibited governmental agencies from using or contracting with entities to use artificial intelligence (AI) to detect concealed firearms in public places.

Issue: Gambling

Outcome: Failed. Died in committee.

(HB 953 Rep. Barnaby and SB 1404 Sen. Simon)

This bill would have increased penalties for individuals or organizations involved in illegal gambling in Florida.

Issue: Sheltering or Aiding Unmarried Minors

Outcome: Failed. Died in committee.

(HB 153 Rep. Tramont and SB 276 Sen. Wright)

This bill would have elevated the crime of sheltering or aiding an unmarried minor to a felony.



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Issue: Cybersecurity Incident Liability

Outcome: Failed. Died in committee.

(HB 1183 Rep. Giallombardo and SB 1576 Sen. DiCeglie)

This bill would have provided liability protections for counties, municipalities, political subdivisions, covered entities, and third-party agents in connection with cybersecurity incidents.

Public Safety

Issue: Fentanyl Testing ("Gage's Law")

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-19

Effective: July 1, 2025

(HB 1195 Rep. Harris and SB 1346 Sen. Polsky)

The bill requires hospitals to test a patient for fentanyl if the patient is receiving emergency services and care for a possible drug overdose and the hospital conducts a urine test to assist in diagnosing the individual. If the urine test comes back positive for fentanyl, the hospital must perform a confirmation test and retain the results of the urine test and the confirmation test as part of the patient's clinical record.

Impact to Sheriffs: This bill will help combat the opioid epidemic by ensuring all hospitals are testing for fentanyl in all drug overdose cases.

Issue: Health Facilities

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-179

Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 229 Rep. Oliver and SB 68 Sen. Martin)

As described above in HB 1195, hospitals must now test for fentanyl if they are treating a patient for a possible drug overdose. This bill does not change that provision of the law. However, this bill does change the requirement under HB 1195 that a hospital *must* perform a confirmation test if the test comes back positive for fentanyl to instead specify that a hospital *may* – but is not required – perform such a confirmation test. *This was a unique situation during the 2025 Legislative Session in which HB 1195 passed and was signed by the Governor during the legislative session before SB 68 passed and was signed by the Governor. As a result of SB 68 being signed after HB 1195 was signed, SB 68 took precedence and amended the law created under HB 1195.*

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill removes a provision of HB 1195 that would have ensured hospitals perform confirmation tests for fentanyl in overdose cases, which are important for confirming the accuracy of an initial urine test that comes back positive for fentanyl.

Issue: Surrendered Newborn Infants

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-17



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Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 791 Rep. Cobb and SB 1690 Sen. McClain)

The bill authorizes hospitals, EMS stations, and fire stations that are staffed 24 hours per day to use infant safety devices to accept surrendered infants and establishes criteria for their use.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will provide parents seeking to surrender their baby with a safer method to do so.

Issue: Spectrum Alert

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-123

Effective: July 1, 2025, except as otherwise provided for in the bill.

(HB 711 Rep. Borrero and SB 500 Sen. Ávila)

This bill establishes a statewide Spectrum Alert system to locate missing children with autism and requires the FDLE—in cooperation with the Department of Transportation, the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, the Department of the Lottery, and local law enforcement agencies— to complete the following by **July 1, 2026**:

- Establish and implement the Spectrum Alert that is compatible with existing alert systems.
- Develop a training program for law enforcement officers which implements crisis intervention team training to improve their ability to understand autism and other mental illnesses, de-escalate interactions, facilitate appropriate interventions, and respond effectively to missing child emergencies involving autism.
- Establish policies and procedures for responding to a reported missing child emergency when the child has autism which must meet certain requirements, including:
 - Immediate and widespread dissemination of critical information when a child with autism is reported missing.
 - Enhancement of emergency response teams' competence by informing them of the unique behaviors and needs of children with autism.
 - Measures to increase public awareness and understanding of the risks associated with autism-related elopement, to foster community support for children with autism.
- Requires law enforcement agencies to undertake certain actions upon receiving a report of a missing child with ASD.

Impact to Sheriffs: FDLE will oversee the implementation and administration of the Spectrum Alert System. Beginning July 1, 2026, sheriff's offices must, upon receiving a report of a missing child with autism, immediately notify local media, inform all on-duty deputies, and alert law enforcement in neighboring counties—mirroring existing procedures for other statewide alerts. Additionally, FDLE will develop a training program for deputies that includes CIT training and create or modify existing policies and procedures for responding to a missing child with autism following the above-specified requirements by July 1, 2026.



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Issue: Harming or Neglecting Children
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-167
Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 1191 Rep. Miller and SB 1286 Sen. Grall)

The bill amends the definitions of harm and neglect of a child in both dependency and criminal law, allowing caregivers to permit sufficiently mature children to engage in independent, unsupervised activities without those actions being considered harm or neglect.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill narrows the definition of neglect and harm under Florida law, excluding situations where parents allow their children to engage in independent, unsupervised activities, such as traveling to and from school, playing outdoors, or staying home for a reasonable period. Neglect is now defined only if these activities involve reckless conduct that endangers the child's health or safety. Deputies should be aware of the updated definitions when assessing whether a parent or caregiver's actions constitute harm or neglect.

Issue: Offenses Involving Motor Vehicles
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-36
Effective: October 1, 2025.

(HB 253 Rep. Bankson and SB 44 Sen. Rodriguez)

The bill criminalizes efforts to obscure license plates to evade law enforcement. Under the bill, *knowingly* altering or covering a license plate, registration, mobile home sticker, or validation sticker to hinder legibility or detection is now a crime, punishable as a second-degree misdemeanor. A license plate obscuring device includes any manual, electronic, or mechanical device designed to switch, flip, cover, or otherwise obscure a plate, or interfere with recording its key features or details. Possessing such a device is a second-degree misdemeanor, while manufacturing, selling, or distributing such devices is a first-degree misdemeanor. Using a license plate obscuring device to facilitate or avoid detection in connection with committing a crime is punishable as a third-degree felony. The bill also makes it a third-degree felony if a person uses red, red and white, or blue lights and effects or attempts to stop another vehicle.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill strengthens law enforcement's ability to identify and prosecute individuals who attempt to obscure their vehicle identification or impersonate law enforcement. This enhances public safety and supports more effective traffic enforcement and criminal investigations.

Issue: Dangerous Excessive Speeding
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-77
Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 351 Rep. Plasencia and SB 1782 Sen. Pizzo)

The bill creates a criminal offense for "dangerous excessive speeding" if a driver exceeds the speed limit by 50 mph or more or operates a vehicle at 100 mph or more in a manner that threatens the safety of



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other persons or property or interferes with the operation of any vehicle. Drivers cited for exceeding the speed limit by over 50 mph must appear at a mandatory hearing.

A first offense is punishable by up to 30 days in jail, a fine of \$500, or both. A second or subsequent offense is punishable by up to 90 days in jail, a fine of \$1,000, or both. If a subsequent conviction occurs within five (5) years after the first conviction, the person's license must be revoked for at least 180 days but not more than a year. Lastly, the bill authorizes, rather than requires, an officer to indicate the applicable civil penalty on a traffic citation for infractions related to exceeding the speed limit by 30 mph or more, or 50 mph or more.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill seeks to deter high-speed driving by establishing stricter penalties for motorists who exceed the speed limit by 50 mph or more, or who drive at 100 mph or above in a manner that endangers others or interferes with traffic. A violation occurs when a driver either exceeds the speed limit by 50 mph or operates a vehicle at 100 mph or more *in a way that threatens public safety or disrupts the operation of any vehicle*. Determining whether a driver traveling at 100 mph is doing so in a dangerous manner will be at the discretion of the responding deputy.

Issue: **Emergency Services**
Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-94**
Effective: *July 1, 2025.*

(HB 1487 Rep. Basabe and SB 1644 Sen. Rodriguez)

Under current law, physicians and technicians of medical facilities, or of volunteer ambulance services, are authorized to use up to two red emergency lights in their personal vehicles while responding to emergencies in the line of duty. A volunteer firefighter is allowed to use up to two red and white emergency lights in a personal vehicle while responding to an emergency in the line of duty. This bill eliminates these caps.

The bill also tightens the requirements for faith-based, nonprofit, volunteer ambulance services to be exempt from the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (COPCN) requirement, while also increasing the number of counties where qualifying volunteer ambulance services may operate without obtaining a COPCN from 4 to 15 counties.

Impact to Sheriffs: Expanding eligibility for volunteer ambulance services may increase access to emergency care for the public. However, it could also mean law enforcement will need to work more closely with outside emergency groups, which could make managing incidents and communication more complicated.

Issue: **Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles**
Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-125**
Effective: *July 1, 2025.*



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(HB 961 Rep. Maney and SB 1348 Sen. Trumbull)

The bill prohibits the unauthorized sale of FLDHSMV service appointments, making violations a first-degree misdemeanor. It also establishes the week of April 14 as Move Over Awareness Week to raise public awareness about the dangers of failing to comply with the Move Over Act. Additionally, the bill mandates the revocation of a habitual offender's restricted driving privilege if they violate the conditions of their restricted driving privilege.

Impact to Sheriffs: The establishment of Move Over Awareness Week will help support law enforcement's efforts to reduce traffic incidents and increase public safety as well as officer safety on the road. Under the bill, Sheriff's offices – along with the FLDHSMV and local governments – are encouraged to sponsor events to promote public awareness of the dangers of failing to comply with the Move Over Law.

Issue: **Transportation**

Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-149**

Effective: *July 1, 2025, unless otherwise provided.*

(HB 567 Rep. McFarland and SB 462 Sen. DiCeglie)

The bill is a comprehensive transportation package that includes several provisions that impact law enforcement and public safety.

School Bus Violations (Took effect June 19, 2025, upon the Governor's signature)

Florida law authorizes school districts to install and operate a school bus infraction detection system on a school bus for the purpose of documenting a motor vehicle that does not stop for a school bus or passes a school bus. The bill changes the current enforcement process for violations of law relating to passing a school bus with a stop sign displayed, as recorded by a school bus infraction detection system. The bill establishes administrative hearing procedures, providing for local hearing officers appointed by the school district or county, hearing procedures, the distribution of civil penalties, and the authorized use of penalties collected.

Current law requires a vehicle owner to contest liability within 30 days of receiving a notice of violation and appear in front of a court that has jurisdiction over traffic infractions. Under the bill, a car owner who receives a notice of violation may request an administrative hearing with either the school district or the county within 60 days after the violation is sent. The bill requires a local hearing officer appointed by the school district or county to determine during an administrative hearing whether a violation has occurred. The bill also sets procedures for the administrative hearing process and authorizes any hearing for a contested notice of violation that is pending on the effective date of the bill to be conducted pursuant to the procedures created by the bill within one (1) year.

Wake Zones (Effective July 1, 2025)

The bill also prohibits a person from operating a car, boat, or any other conveyance at a speed that creates an excessive wake on a flooded or inundated street or highway.



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Electric Bicycles (Effective July 1, 2025)

The bill also authorizes local governments to adopt ordinances regarding age and identification requirements to operate an electric bicycle, motorized scooter, or micromobility device and to provide training on the safe operation of these devices.

Impact to Sheriffs: For counties that have authorized school bus infraction camera systems, this bill will establish a better process for citizens that have received notices of violations to address those violations. The bill also takes a step towards deterring individuals from speeding through flooded streets, which has been a large source of property damage during hurricanes and major storms. The bill does not specify a penalty for violations, however.

Issue: **Dangerous Dogs ("Pam Rock Act")**

Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-61**

Effective: *July 1, 2025.*

(HB 593 Rep. Sapp and SB 572 Sen. Collins)

The bill creates the "Pam Rock Act," to enhance public safety by strengthening the regulation of dangerous dogs in Florida. The bill establishes new procedures for animal control authorities for confiscating and euthanizing dogs deemed dangerous and imposes stricter requirements on their owners.

Specifically, the bill requires the confiscation and impoundment of an animal under investigation as a dangerous dog if it has killed a person or inflicted a bite that leaves a significant mark. The bill does not alter the existing definition of a "dangerous dog" under s. 767.11, FS. Animal control authorities must humanely euthanize any dangerous dog that has killed a person or inflicted a significant bite and has been voluntarily surrendered. For other surrendered dangerous dogs, animal control has the discretion to either humanely euthanize the animal or offer it for adoption. If a dangerous dog is placed for adoption, authorities must clearly post signage on the enclosure indicating its dangerous designation and inform potential adopters of all legal requirements for ownership.

The bill requires owners of dangerous dogs to have their dog spayed or neutered, implanted with a microchip, and covered by a minimum of \$100,000 in liability insurance. Tampering with or removing the microchip is classified as a third-degree felony. Dangerous dogs must also be confined in a secure pen when outside. Violations are treated as noncriminal infractions, subject to fines of up to \$1,000. However, obstructing animal control efforts is elevated to a first-degree misdemeanor. Additionally, the bill increases penalties for owners who are aware of their dog's dangerous behavior—even if the dog has not been officially declared dangerous—if the dog later causes death or serious injury, punishable as a first-degree misdemeanor.



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More than 35 sheriffs gathered for Sheriffs Day at the Capitol to meet with Governor DeSantis and legislative leaders, sharing their public safety expertise and discussing how to keep our communities safe.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill increases public safety by giving animal control and law enforcement clearer authority to act in cases involving dangerous dogs. Sheriffs that run animal control in their county should be aware of the new requirements and responsibilities, including mandatory confiscation and impoundment of a dog under investigation, required euthanasia in certain cases, enforcement of ownership requirements, and requirements that must be met if a dangerous dog is put up for adoption.

Issue: **Removal of Altered Sexual Depictions Posted Without Consent ("Brooke's Law")**

Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-**

Effective: *The bill took effect on June 10, 2025, upon the Governor's signature.*

(HB 1161 Rep. Duggan and SB 1400 Sen. Calatayud)

The bill requires certain internet platforms to establish a process by which a person may request the removal of nonconsensual altered sexual depictions, also known as "deepfakes." The bill also provides for civil remedies for failure to comply with a request.



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Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will help hold bad actors accountable and protect victims from the growing threat of nonconsensual deepfake pornography.

Issue: **Trespass at Large Scale Ticketed Events**

Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-30**

Effective: *The bill took effect upon the Governor's signature on May 16, 2025.*

(SB 1828 Sen. Martin and HB 1447 Rep. Giallombardo)

The bill creates a third-degree felony if a person interferes with a sporting or entertainment event by willfully entering or remaining in a venue during a ticketed covered event wherein attendance exceeds 5,000 persons, without being authorized, licensed, or invited to enter or remain in such venue. The bill makes it a third-degree felony for trespassing upon an area being maintained or secured by federal, state, or local law enforcement officers when such area is legally posted with a specified notice that states: "THIS AREA IS A DESIGNATED RESTRICTED SITE SECURED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND ANYONE WHO TRESPASSES ON THIS PROPERTY COMMITS A FELONY."

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will help prevent future instances similar to what occurred during the 2024 Copa America final at the Hardrock Stadium when thousands of fans without tickets pushed past security and breached the venue. Under the bill, a person faces a felony for trespassing at a large-scale ticketed event.

Issue: **Leaving the Scene of a Crash Involving Only Damage to Vehicle or Property**

Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-14**

Effective: *October 1, 2025.*

(HB 479 Rep. Daley and SB 1378 Sen. Arrington)

The bill allows the court to order a driver convicted of leaving the scene of a crash to pay restitution to the other driver.

Impact to Sheriffs: This bill strengthens public safety by increasing accountability for drivers involved in hit-and-run crashes.

Issue: **Boating Safety ("Lucy's Law")**

Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-197**

Effective: *July 1, 2025.*

(HB 289 Rep. Oliver and SB 628 Sen. Perez)

The bill makes several changes to boating safety to align boating laws more closely with motor vehicle laws. Specifically, the bill aligns the offenses and penalties for leaving the scene of a boating accident, reckless operation of a vessel, BUI manslaughter, and vessel homicide with the corresponding driving offenses. The bill also makes it a second-degree misdemeanor to give a false statement to officers after a crash, similar to the current prohibition against knowingly making a false report relating to vehicle crashes.



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Lastly, the bill requires FWC to adopt rules to establish minimum standards for online boating safety education courses and anyone who is convicted of one noncriminal boating infraction must complete a boating safety course.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will help ensure that dangerous behavior on the water is treated with the same seriousness as on the road.

Issue: Driving Under the Influence (“Trenton’s Law”)
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-121
Effective: October 1, 2025.

(HB 687 Rep. Kendall and SB 138 Sen. Wright)

The bill increases the penalty for a conviction of DUI manslaughter, BUI manslaughter, vehicular homicide, or vessel homicide from a second-degree felony to a first-degree felony if the person has a prior conviction for any of those offenses. It also makes a *first* refusal to submit to a lawful breath or urine test subsequent to a DUI arrest a criminal offense, punishable as a second-degree misdemeanor. The bill retains the existing penalty of a first-degree misdemeanor for a second or subsequent refusal.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill increase accountability for individuals who kill others while driving a boat or vehicle under the influence. Additionally, by making a first refusal a criminal offense, the bill may encourage greater compliance with DUI testing and support more effective enforcement efforts.

Issue: Misuse of Emergency Communications Systems
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-60
Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 279 Rep. Partington and SB 726 Sen. Ingoglia)

The bill increases penalties for the misuse of the emergency communications system. Specifically, the bill expands the scope of the prohibition against a person accessing the 911 system for the purpose of making a false alarm or complaint or reporting false information that could result in an emergency response by any public safety agency by also prohibiting a person from *causing another party* to access the 911 system for the purpose of making such a false alarm or complaint or reporting false information. Under the bill, a false report that leads to a death is a second-degree felony, while one that leads to serious injury is a third-degree felony. The bill reduces the number of prior convictions needed to subject a person to an enhanced penalty of a third-degree felony for misusing the 911 system from four (4) convictions to two (2) convictions. Lastly, the bill requires restitution be paid to law enforcement to cover the cost of the investigation and prosecution and to compensate victims for any injury or property damage.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will go a long way towards cracking down on people that make swatting calls will help cover costs associated with 911 misuse.



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Issue: Use of Tracking Devices or Applications to Commit Dangerous Crimes
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-71
Effective: October 1, 2025.

(HB 663 Rep. Esposito and SB 1168 Sen. Leek)

The bill increases the penalty for unlawfully installing, placing, or using a tracking device or tracking application from a third-degree felony to a second-degree felony when done to commit or facilitate the commission of a dangerous crime.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will help deter bad actors from using bluetooth-enabled devices to stalk, intimidate, or track victims without their knowledge while committing serious crimes like murder, human trafficking, domestic violence and kidnapping.

Issue: Tampering With an Electronic Monitoring Device
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-78
Effective: October 1, 2025.

(HB 437 Rep. Daley and SB 1054 Sen. Garcia)

The bill increases criminal penalties for tampering with an electronic monitoring device based on the underlying offense, but maintains a third-degree felony for minors, regardless of the underlying offense. The bill also requires a court to revoke pretrial release for anyone who tampers with a monitoring device while on pretrial release but allows the court to set a new bond if it determines that adequate conditions exist to protect the community, ensure the accused shows up for trial, and maintain the judicial process.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will help dissuade individuals on pre-trial release from cutting their electronic monitors and reduce opportunities for further violations.

Issue: Unlawful Distribution of Controlled Substances Resulting in Death
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-69
Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 457 Rep. Koster and SB 612 Sen. Burgess)

This bill creates an additional offense of third-degree murder, punishable as a second-degree felony, if a minor unlawfully distributes a substance that he or she should have known contained fentanyl and it is proven to have caused or have been a substantial factor in the person's death.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill closes a gap in current law by making sure that minors who knowingly sell drugs laced with fentanyl that lead to someone's death are held accountable.

Issue: Cyber Sexual Harassment
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-84
Effective: October 1, 2025.



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(HB 1451 Rep. Baker and SB 1084 Sen. Martin)

The bill revises the offense of sexual cyber harassment by removing the requirement that the offender intended to cause emotional distress to the depicted person and disseminated the image for no legitimate purpose. It also establishes that sharing sexually explicit images is a violation even if the images do not include personal identifying information, if they are published alongside other information that identifies the person. The bill also elevates the offense to a third-degree felony if committed for financial gain, and to a second-degree felony for repeat offenders.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill strengthens law enforcement's ability to pursue sexual cyberharassment cases by removing the requirement to prove intent to cause emotional distress, allowing charges to be based solely on the harmful act. The bill will also make it easier for victims to seek justice through civil lawsuits by allowing for the recovery of punitive damages and extending the statute of limitations in both misdemeanor and felony cases involving sexual cyberharassment.

Issue: Sexual Offenses by Persons Previously Convicted of Sexual Offenses

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-135

Effective: October 1, 2025.

(HB 1455 Rep. Baker and SB 716 Sen. Martin)

The bill requires courts to impose mandatory minimum prison sentences for individuals with prior convictions or adjudications withheld for specified sexual offenses who are convicted of a subsequent qualifying offense, as follows:

- 10 years for offenses such as lewd or lascivious molestation of a victim under 16 or an elderly or disabled person, possession or transmission of child pornography, and online exploitation crimes;
- 15 years for possession of child pornography with intent to promote; and
- 20 years for crimes involving child sexual performance or trafficking minors.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill enhances public safety by imposing mandatory minimum sentences on repeat sexual offenders.

Issue: Sexual Images

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-99

Effective: October 1, 2025.

(HB 757 Rep. Redondo and SB 1180 Sen. Gaetz)

The bill makes it a second-degree felony to possess with intent to promote a lewd or lascivious image, and a third-degree felony to knowingly solicit, possess, control, or intentionally view such an image. Under the bill, a "lewd or lascivious image" means any image that depicts a person masturbating, exhibiting his or her genitals in a lewd or lascivious manner, or committing any other sexual act that does not involve physical or sexual contact with the victim, in the presence of an identifiable victim who is less than 16 years of age.



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The bill also makes it a third-degree felony if a person knowingly solicits child pornography. The bill provides criteria that may be used to evidence actual or simulated lewd exhibition of the genitals of a minor for the purposes of classifying an image as child pornography.

Under the bill, it is a third-degree felony to, without the consent of the person depicted:

- Willfully generate an altered sexual depiction;
- Solicit any altered sexual depiction;
- Possess any altered sexual depiction with the intent to maliciously promote such visual depiction.

Lastly, the bill authorizes a person who is portrayed in an altered sexual depiction without his or her consent to initiate a civil cause of action against specified offenders.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will help law enforcement crack down on sexual child predators and individuals who create, possess or obtain deepfake images.

Issue: Capital Human Trafficking of Vulnerable Persons for Sexual Exploitation

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-156

Effective: October 1, 2025.

(HB 1283 by Rep. Jacques and SB 1804 Sen. Martin)

The bill allows for the death penalty for certain non-homicide crimes involving human trafficking. Specifically, the bill creates a new crime of Capital Human Trafficking of Vulnerable Persons for Sexual Exploitation. A person 18 years or older who knowingly initiates, organizes, plans, finances, directs, manages, or supervises a venture that has subjected a child less than 12 years of age, or a person who is mentally defective or mentally incapacitated, to sexual exploitation commits a capital felony. A person convicted of capital human trafficking must register as a sexual predator.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will ensure those who commit heinous crimes involving human trafficking of vulnerable individuals can now face the death penalty.

Issue: Aggravating Factors for Capital Felonies

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-79

Effective: October 1, 2025.

(HB 693 Rep. Redondo and SB 984 Sen. Gruters)

The bill provides an additional aggravating factor for sentencing for capital felonies where the victim was gathered with one or more persons for a school activity, religious activity, or public government meeting.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will provide juries with an additional tool when considering recommending the death sentence in capital felonies.



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Issue: Offenses Involving Gift Cards
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-151
Effective: October 1, 2025.

(HB 1007 Rep. Greco and SB 1198 Sen. DiCeglie)

The bill criminalizes fraudulent activities such as unauthorized possession, tampering, and schemes to fraudulently obtain or use gift cards, and makes gift card fraud a first-degree misdemeanor. The charges may be elevated to a third-degree felony if there is a previous conviction or the value of the gift card or the value of other stolen goods or services exceeds \$750.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will help crack down on scammers to deter gift card fraud and protect consumers.

Issue: Probation for Misdemeanor Offenses
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-70
Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 91 Rep. Rayner and SB 878 Sen. Martin)

The bill expands current law that allows judges to sentence misdemeanants to up to a year of probation if alcohol was a significant factor in the alleged offense. Under the bill, the courts may sentence a defendant who is found guilty of any misdemeanor to a term of probation of up to one year if a controlled substance, a controlled substance analog, or a chemical substance was a significant factor in the commission of the crime.

Since a court may currently sentence a defendant to a term of probation of up to one year for committing a first-degree misdemeanor, the bill only increases the maximum term of probation for those defendants who commit second-degree misdemeanors and only where the court finds that a controlled substance is a significant factor. Such authority is consistent with the court's existing sentencing authority for second-degree misdemeanors in which alcohol is a significant factor.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will increase public safety by keeping defendants accused of lower-level crimes committed while under the influence of controlled substances under court supervision longer and give those defendants more time to receive treatment and recover.

Issue: Prearranged Transportation Services
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-66
Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 1525 Rep. Busatta and SB 1696 Sen. Calatayud)

The bill prohibits individuals from intentionally impersonating a transportation network company (TNC) driver. A violation is a second-degree misdemeanor. However, if the impersonation occurs during the



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commission of, or to assist in committing, a separate felony offense, the violation is elevated to a third-degree felony.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will make it a crime to impersonate an Uber or other type of rideshare driver, helping to better protect passengers from bad actors.

Issue: **Emergency Preparedness and Response**

Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-190**

Effective: *Took effect upon the Governor's signature on June 26, 2025, except as otherwise provided for in the bill.*

(HB 1535 Rep. McFarland and SB 180 Sen. DiCeglie)

The bill supports Florida homeowners rebuilding after a storm with clear, streamlined permitting resources and clarification about rebuilding guidelines to ensure families can make the repairs they need without being hit with a higher tax bill. The bill also increases disaster management planning, emergency resource coordination, financial transparency, and reporting across state and local government disaster management entities. The bill includes a host of changes regarding emergency preparedness and response duties and directive of local governments and the responsibilities of the Florida Division of Emergency Management (DEM). A summary of key provisions of the bill that will impact sheriff's offices, particularly those who run emergency management in their county is provided below.

The bill requires DEM to establish biennial training requirements for local government officials with emergency management roles and to provide mandatory emergency management training for local elected and appointed leaders.

The DEM must conduct annual hurricane readiness sessions for each region by April 1 to facilitate coordination between all emergency management stakeholders. **These sessions are mandatory for county emergency management directors** and open to other municipal and county personnel. *Beginning January 1, 2026*, FDEM must post all emergency-related contracts to the state's secure contract tracking system and submit an annual report to the Legislature by January 15 detailing all emergency-related expenditures, inventory, and reimbursement status. **Each agency, county, and municipality must designate emergency contacts and alternates and report them to the DEM by May 1 every year.**

Local governments are required to maintain an emergency preparedness webpage with information such as evacuation procedures, shelter locations, flood zones, and post storm checklists. They must also develop and annually update a post storm permitting plan and publish a permitting guide by May 1. All state and local emergency-related contracts executed, amended, or renewed on or after July 1, 2025, must include a provision requiring vendors who breach contracts during an emergency recovery period to pay a \$5,000 penalty plus actual or liquidated damages.



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Impact to Sheriffs: Sheriffs who run emergency management in their county should be familiar with the changes under the bill. Additional details can be found in the [full bill text](#) and in the [Senate staff bill summary](#).

Issue: Fire Prevention

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-115

Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 551 Rep. Borrero and SB 1078 Sen. McClain)

The bill aims to improve fire prevention and safety measures across the state by streamlining the permitting process, ensuring inspections are conducted in a timely manner. *This bill is included in this report primarily for sheriffs who oversee fire rescue services in their counties. It impacts local enforcement responsibilities related to permitting, inspections, and compliance timelines for fire alarm and sprinkler system projects, which may fall under the jurisdiction of sheriff-run fire rescue operations.*

The bill requires local enforcement agencies to issue building permits for fire alarm or sprinkler system projects within two (2) business days of receiving a completed application. The bill repeals the requirement that a local enforcement agency must perform at least one inspection of the fire alarm system or fire sprinkler system project. However, if an inspection is requested from a local enforcement agency, it must perform an inspection within three (3) business days.

The bill provides that if a local enforcement agency needs additional documentation for recording purposes, the contractor must provide the requested documentation within four (4) business days after the local enforcement agency's inspection or four (4) days after the request, whichever is later. However, a local enforcement agency may not require a contractor to provide additional documents or plans reviews that are outside the scope of the permitted work needed on the permit application.

The bill requires local governments to refund ten (10) percent of the building permit fee for each business day they miss the deadline to issue a permit or perform an inspection for fire alarm or fire sprinkler projects under the simplified permitting process—unless there is a written extension, the applicant caused the delay, or it was due to force majeure or extraordinary circumstances. Each ten (10) percent refund is based on the original amount of the permit fee. Additionally, the bill requires local enforcement agencies to establish a simplified permitting process by October 1, 2025.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will help streamline the permit process for upgrading fire prevention and protection for businesses and homeowners. Sheriffs who run fire rescue in their county should be aware of the new timeframes established in the bill regarding permitting and inspection requests.

Public Safety Bills that Failed:

Issue: Public Safety

Outcome: Failed. Died in committee.



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(HB 1211 Rep. Abbott and SB 1554 Sen. Collins)

This bill, as originally drafted, would have required the development of a unified 911 system in Florida by 2029.

Issue: Criminal Offender Substance Abuse Pilot Program (SOBER Act)

Outcome: Failed. Vetoed by the Governor.

(HB 1095 Rep. Koster and SB 1140 Sen. Gruters)

The bill would have created a Substance Abuse Accountability Pilot Program to be administered by the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office from October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2027, for individuals convicted of a felony or first-degree misdemeanor and required to abstain from alcohol or controlled substances as a condition of probation.

Issue: Utility Terrain Vehicles

Outcome: Failed. Died in committee.

(HB 221 Rep. Gentry and SB 88 Sen. Wright)

This bill would have authorized the operation of utility terrain vehicles (UTVs) on certain roadways and parts of the State Highway System.

Issue: Food and Hemp Products

Outcome: Failed. Died on House Calendar.

(HB 7027 Rep. Salzman and SB 438 Sen. Burton)

This bill would have created a regulatory framework for the sale of hemp products and would have included measures aimed at protecting children from being targeted by hemp retailers.

Issue: Hands-Free Driving

Outcome: Failed. Died in committee.

(HB 501 Rep. Tant and SB 1318 Sen. Grall)

This bill would have prohibited the use of handheld wireless communications devices while operating a motor vehicle.

Issue: Motor Vehicle Repair Work ("Lilly Glaubach Act")

Outcome: Failed. Died in committee.

(HB 807 Rep. Baker and SB 92 Sen. Gruters)

This bill would have required auto repair shops to request a written crash report for repairs estimated at \$5,000 or more.



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Issue: Emergency Communications State Plan

Outcome: Failed. Died in committee.

(HB 483 Rep. Weinberger and SB 1682 Sen. Grall)

The bill would have developed a definition for “first responder” to include 911 dispatchers.

Issue: Storage of Handguns in Private Conveyances and Vessels

Outcome: Failed. Died in committee.

(HB 15 Rep. Hinson and SB 190 Sen. Rouson)

The bill would have required handguns in vehicles or vessels to be securely stored and would have required law enforcement agencies to launch public awareness campaigns regarding safe storage of firearms.

Issue: Youth Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Pilot Program

Outcome: Failed. Died in committee.

(HB 171 Rep. Davis and SB 1014 Sen. Darryl Rouson)

The bill would have created a pilot program to implement a conflict resolution and peer mediation curriculum in a select number of middle schools to reduce juvenile violence.

Issue: Virtual Currency Kiosk Businesses

Outcome: Failed. Died in committee.

(HB 319 Rep. Fabricio and SB 292 Sen. Burton)

This bill would have established a regulatory framework for virtual currency kiosk businesses.

Issue: Sales or Transfers of Firearms to Persons Under 21 Years of Age

Outcome: Failed. Died in committee.

(HB 759 Rep. Salzman and SB 920 Sen. Collins)

This bill would have reduced the age for individuals to purchase long guns from 21 to 18.

Issue: Specific Medical Diagnoses in Child Protective Investigations ("Patterson's Law")

Outcome: Failed. Died in messages.

(HB 511 Rep. Bartleman and SB 304 Sen. Sharief)

The bill would have required the Department of Children and Families and child abuse investigators to consider and rule out certain diseases and medical conditions which can be mistaken as evidence of child abuse or neglect before involving law enforcement agencies or filing a petition to find the child dependent under state law.



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Issue: Social Media Use by Minors

Outcome: Failed. Died in messages.

(HB 743 Rep. Salzman and SB 868 Sen. Ingoglia)

The bill sought to disable end-to-end encryption for social media accounts of children under 16, granting parents full access to their messages and permitting law enforcement to access messages related to felony investigations involving minors.

Issue: Court-Ordered Sealing of Criminal History Records

Outcome: Failed. Died in Committee.

(HB 235 Rep. Koster and SB 1000 Sen. Simon)

The bill would have expanded eligibility for court-ordered sealing of criminal history records.

Jails, Corrections & Re-Entry

Issue: Corrections

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-81

Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 903 Rep. Jacques and SB 1604 Sen. Martin)

This bill includes a host of changes related to the Department of Corrections to strengthen sentencing laws, improve oversight of correctional facilities, and modernize mental health treatment for inmates in the DOC. The bill also includes several provisions pertinent to sheriff's offices that run the jail in their county.

The bill sets requirements for federal civil actions filed under Section 1983 by "prisoners," defined as individuals incarcerated in a prison *or* jail. It mandates that prisoners exhaust all administrative remedies before filing lawsuits about their confinement conditions. Courts are empowered to dismiss claims they deem frivolous. Additionally, actions related to confinement cannot be filed for mental or emotional injury without first showing a physical injury or the commission of a sexual act. These actions must be filed within one year of when the incident, conduct, or conditions occurred or were discovered.

The bill also exempts jail and prison personnel from criminal penalties for using tracking devices or applications when used on individuals in their custody, in the scope of their employment.

The bill clarifies that courts must impose mandatory minimum sentences under Florida's 10-20-Life law when a person commits certain crimes while possessing a firearm, destructive device, semiautomatic firearm with a high-capacity magazine, or a machine gun, and that these sentences must run consecutively. A court may impose a mandatory minimum term under 10-20-Life consecutively to sentences for other felony offenses not covered by the statute.

Additionally, while this does not specifically impact sheriffs who run their jail, it is interesting to note that the bill authorizes a warden to directly petition the circuit court for an order compelling an inmate to



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submit to emergency surgical intervention or other medical services when the inmate is competent but refusing necessary treatment and is engaging in active or ongoing self-injurious behavior that presents a threat to the safety of DOC staff or other inmates.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill prevents frivolous inmate lawsuits in jails and prisons and ensures that those who commit crimes serve the time they deserve by allowing consecutive sentences for felony offenses.

Prevention and Youth Services

Issue: Mental Health (Tristin Murphy Act)

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-180

Effective: October 1, 2025.

(HB 1207 Rep. Cobb and SB 168 Sen. Bradley)

The bill, named the “Tristin Murphy Act” represents a significant shift in how Florida addresses individuals with serious mental illness who come into contact with the criminal justice system by offering alternative pathways to prosecuting defendants with mental illnesses.

Misdemeanor and Felony Diversion

The bill creates model processes for both misdemeanor and pretrial felony mental health diversion programs. Under the bill, a defendant charged with any misdemeanor, or a defendant charged with certain (non-violent) felonies may be eligible to participate in a diversion program. The bill provides procedures for mental health screening and diversion to treatment. Defendants must consent to treatment and may be released on their own recognizance if they agree to follow all treatment recommendations. Upon successful completion, the state attorney must consider dismissing the charges or may refer the case to another mental health court if dismissal is inappropriate.



The Tristin Murphy Act, creates model processes for diverting certain defendants into mental health treatment. Tristin's parents, Cindee and Dennis Murphy of Charlotte County celebrate the passage of SB 168 on the Senate floor with the bill sponsor, Senator Jennifer Bradley. SB 168 marks an incredible victory for mental health in Florida.



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Misdemeanor or Ordinance Violation Mental Health Diversion Program

For misdemeanor violations, the bill allows jail medical or corrections staff to screen defendants within 24 hours of booking using a validated mental health tool. If signs of mental illness are detected, the defendant may be evaluated for involuntary examination by a mental health professional.

If a defendant meets the criteria for involuntary examination, the mental health professional may issue a professional certificate referring the defendant to a receiving facility. The defendant must then be transported within 72 hours to a receiving facility for further evaluation for involuntary examination. Transportation may be made with a hold for jail custody, or the court may request that the defendant be transported back to appear before the court. Upon receiving a discharge or outpatient treatment plan, the court may release the defendant on their own recognizance, contingent on full compliance with the discharge or outpatient plan. The state attorney and defense attorney must have an opportunity to be heard before the court releases the defendant.

If a professional certificate is not issued, but a defendant has a mental illness, the bill requires the court to order the defendant to be assessed for outpatient treatment by a local mental health treatment center. This assessment may be completed:

- At the jail via telehealth by the local mental health treatment center;
- At the local mental health treatment center after the sheriff or jail authorities transport the defendant to and from the treatment center; or
- By releasing the defendant on his or her own recognizance on the conditions that the assessment be completed at the local mental health treatment center within 48 hours after his or her release and that all treatment recommendations be followed.

If an assessment results in an outpatient treatment plan, and the defendant has not already been released, the defendant may be released on his or her own recognizance on the condition that all treatment recommendations be followed. The state attorney and the defense attorney must have an opportunity to be heard before release.

The bill also authorizes the state attorney, the defense attorney, or the court to request the defendant be screened at any stage of the criminal proceedings to determine if there is an indication of mental illness. If the defendant is no longer in custody, he or she may be evaluated and assessed as provided for defendants who are on pretrial release.

Upon the defendant's successful completion of all treatment recommendations from any mental health evaluation or assessment completed, the state attorney must consider dismissing the defendant's charges. If dismissal is deemed inappropriate, the state attorney may refer the case to a mental health court or another available mental health diversion program. If the defendant fails to comply with the discharge or outpatient treatment plan, the court may exhaust therapeutic interventions aimed at improving compliance before considering returning the defendant to jail.



Pretrial Felony Mental Health Diversion Program

Under the bill, a defendant may be eligible for the pretrial felony mental health diversion program of he or she has a mental illness, has no more than three (3) prior felony convictions in the past five (5) years, is not charged with a violent felony and does not have a significant history of violence.

The bill grants the state attorney sole discretion over program eligibility, including waiving criteria in extenuating circumstances. At any point in the pretrial process, the state attorney may recommend a mental health screening, to be conducted by jail staff or a qualified professional. Screening results must be shared with both the state and defense attorneys. If mental illness is indicated, the state attorney may consider the defendant for the pretrial felony mental health diversion program.

Similar to the misdemeanor mental health diversion program, if a defendant agrees to participate, he or she must be assessed for outpatient treatment by a local mental health treatment center and the assessment can be completed at the jail via telehealth, the local mental health treatment center or by releasing the defendant on his or her own recognizance on the condition that the assessment be completed at the local mental health treatment center within 48 hours after his or her release and that all treatment recommendations be followed.

If the defendant successfully completes the treatment recommendations from the mental health evaluation or assessment, the state attorney must consider dismissing the charges. If the defendant fails to comply with pretrial release, or any aspect of his or her treatment plan, the state attorney may revoke the defendant's participation in the program.

Expands Training Options Under the Criminal Justice, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Reinvestment Grant Program

The bill expands programs and diversion initiatives supported by the Criminal Justice, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Reinvestment Grant program to include veterans' treatment court programs, specialized training for 911 operators and EMT's to identify which response team is most appropriate under the circumstances, and specialized responses by crisis intervention teams. **The bill provides that fiscally constrained counties who receive such grants are no longer required to provide local matching funds.** Communities seeking to establish misdemeanor or felony mental health diversion programs are encouraged to apply for grants.

Local sheriffs' departments, state attorneys, public defenders, courts, and local treatment providers are authorized to collaborate to establish policies and procedures to meet the specific needs of each community and to develop a form that a defendant must sign to consent to treatment.

Mental-Health Conditions in Probation and Corrections

The bill also protects continuity of care beyond arrest and adjudication. A defendant who was once found incompetent to proceed and later regained competency, and who is sentenced to probation, must have a mental health evaluation and follow recommendations as a condition of probation. Additionally, the



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Department of Corrections must evaluate each inmate's physical and mental health before assigning work details or placing them in correctional work programs.

Statewide Behavioral-Health Data Repository

Lastly, the bill establishes the Florida Behavioral Health Care Data Repository (data repository) within the Northwest Regional Data Center (NWRDC) for the purpose of creating a centralized system for collecting and analyzing existing statewide data related to behavioral health care in the state.

Impact to Sheriffs: The Tristin Murphy Act is a landmark effort to reshape Florida's response to individuals with serious mental illness who come into contact with the criminal justice system. The legislation recognizes that some people in crisis often need treatment—not incarceration. The bill provides local agencies with the tools to divert individuals into treatment when clinically appropriate and improve safety for both the individual and the community. Sheriffs who run their jails should be familiar with the provisions of the bill, specifically those provisions that allow jail medical or corrections staff to screen a defendant booked into the jail for any misdemeanor or certain felony charges.

Issue: Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-184

Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 1439 Rep. Hunschofsky and SB 1620 Sen. Rouson)

The bill enacts a series of reforms based on the Commission on Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder's January 1, 2025 report, beginning with a mandate that the DCF establish rules for mobile response services tailored specifically to individuals aged 65 and older. In order to foster a supportive care environment, managing entities will be tasked with promoting person-first language and trauma-informed approaches through regular training and the dissemination of best practices.

At least once every two (2) years and in collaboration with the Agency for Health Care Administration, DCF must evaluate the demand for additional short-term residential facilities and beds, then take steps to meet any identified needs. Additionally, DCF in consultation with the Department of Education must review school-based behavioral health care access in the state through telehealth, with an emphasis on underserved and rural communities.

Discharge planning requirements are expanded so that facilities coordinate both the administration of and ongoing access to long-term injectable medications before and after release. Finally, the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute will conduct an in-depth analysis of publicly funded substance abuse and mental health programs, Medicare included, to inform future policy and ensure systemwide effectiveness.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill enhances access to quality mental health care in Florida and strengthens continuity of care across systems.



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Issue: Behavioral Health Managing Entities
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-71
Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 633 Rep. Koster and SB 1354 Sen. Trumbull)

The bill enhances transparency and accountability of behavioral health managing entities by requiring regular audits. Under the bill, the DCF will contract for operational and financial audits of managing entities and analyze the data provided. DCF and managing entities will develop strategies to prevent admissions from acute care, jails, prisons, and forensic facilities. These will include integrating behavioral health services into the child welfare system and addressing housing needs for individuals released from facilities who are homeless. Managing entities must report the numbers and percentages of high utilizers, diversion from acute care, appointment wait times, post-hospitalization outpatient care, service accessibility, and emergency room visits. The bill also requires the DCF to post the managing entities performance information to its website each month.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill aims to improve the efficiency and transparency of behavioral health services, strengthening Florida's behavioral health safety net program for mental health and substance use disorder services.

Issue: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Care Expansion
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-143
Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 1091 Rep. Gonzalez Pittman and SB 1240 Sen. Calatayud)

The bill recognizes Florida's 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (988 Lifeline) as a component of the coordinated system of care and requires DCF to authorize and provide oversight of the 988 Lifeline call centers. DCF will adopt rules establishing the process and minimum standards for authorization of 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline call centers and implement statewide interoperability with the 911 system.

The bill clarifies the roles of courts and administrative law judges in involuntary services proceedings, allowing judges to waive patient attendance and issue continued service orders. The bill also authorizes a designated receiving facility to retain a patient, who had an emergency medical condition and was transferred to the receiving facility after being medically cleared, for the remainder of the 72-hour involuntary examination period if the patient continues to meet the criteria for involuntary examination, even if the transfer was delayed or notification was late.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will modernize and streamline processes to make mental health services more effective and accessible in Florida.

Issue: Juvenile Justice
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-153
Effective: July 1, 2025.



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(HB 1405 Rep. Jacques and SB 1344 Sen. Simon)

This bill includes a comprehensive set of changes to s. 984.01, F.S., to establish judicial, nonjudicial, and other procedures for addressing status offenses committed by children who are truant, run away from caregivers, or display ungovernable behavior that puts them at risk of harm. It authorizes the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to develop and implement early intervention programs to protect at-risk youths and strengthen families. A [detailed memo](#) from the Department of Juvenile Justice outlining the new

changes was sent to the Sheriffs on June 6, 2025.



Sheriffs and staff from Senate District 3 gather to present Senator Corey Simon with the FSA Friend of the Sheriff Award for his tireless efforts for public safety and law enforcement during the 2024 legislative session.

The below provisions detail specifics around taking a child into custody and are pertinent to law enforcement.

The bill prohibits the use of detention care or a secure detention facility intended for juvenile delinquents, or the use of a jail or similar facility for a child under the jurisdiction of the court solely for a child *in need of services*. Under the bill, a child *in need of services* means a child for whom there is no pending petition filed with the court alleging the child is

delinquent or no current court-ordered supervision by the DJJ for delinquency under chapter 985 or court-ordered supervision by DCF under chapter 39. The child must also be found by the court to have persistently run away, to be a habitual truant, or be ungovernable.

A “shelter” means a shelter facility approved by DJJ for the temporary care of runaway children, for children placed for voluntary shelter respite upon request of the child or the child’s parent, legal guardian or custodian, or for placement of a child who has been adjudicated a child in need of services or who has been found in contempt of court under s. 984.09, F.S. Shelters must provide 24-hour continual supervision.



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A child who is held in direct or indirect contempt must be placed in a shelter. The bill amends s. 984.13, F.S., to provide that a child may be taken into custody (*underlined provisions are new provisions in the law*):

- By a law enforcement officer when the officer reasonably believes that the child has run away from his or her parents, legal guardian, or custodian;
- By a designated school representative or a law enforcement officer when the officer reasonably believes the child is absent from school without authorization;
- Pursuant to a court order based on sworn testimony *after* a child in need of services petition is filed;
- Pursuant to a court order that the child has been found guilty of contempt; and
- By a law enforcement officer when the child agrees to or requests services.

The person taking the child into custody must:

- Release the child to a parent, legal guardian, custodian or responsible adult relative and make a full report to the DJJ within three days after release; or
- Deliver the child to a shelter when the parent is not available to take immediate custody, the child requested voluntary family services and shelter placement, a court order for shelter placement has been issued, or the child and parent voluntarily agree to temporary shelter placement.
- Deliver the child to a hospital for necessary evaluation and treatment if the child is believed to be suffering from a serious physical condition which requires either diagnosis or treatment.
- Deliver the child to a designated public receiving facility for examination under if the child is believed to be mentally ill, including immediate threat of suicide.
- Deliver the child to a hospital, addictions receiving facility, or treatment resource if the child appears to be intoxicated and has threatened, attempted, or inflicted physical harm on himself or herself or another, or is incapacitated by substance abuse.

Lastly, the bill clarifies that any finding by a court of a minor in possession of a firearm under s. 790.22, F.S., regardless of whether the court adjudicates the minor delinquent or withholds adjudication, will constitute a prior offense when determining second or subsequent violations of the section.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill takes a significant step in protecting at-risk youth and strengthening families by reinforcing accountability measures and emphasizing early detection of behavioral issues and promoting rehabilitation over punishment. Deputies should familiarize themselves with the provisions of the bill that outline who may take a child who has run away or skipped school into custody and where they may be delivered to.

Issue: Child Welfare
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-186
Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 1127 Rep. Weinberger and SB 7012 Sen. Grall)



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The bill makes several changes to child welfare services provided by the Department of Children and Families (DCF), including establishing a foster-care pilot program and a recruitment program to attract workers to investigate child-abuse reports. Specifically, the bill requires DCF to establish a four-year pilot program that would place children with behavioral problems in family-like settings rather than in group homes. The bill also requires DCF to create a Child Protective Investigator (CPI) and case manager recruitment program for individuals who have previously held public safety and service positions.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will help address high turnover rates among child protective investigators and case managers by creating a recruitment program to attract workers, such as former law enforcement officers, first responders, military servicemembers, teachers, and healthcare providers, and emergency management professionals to serve as child protective investigators and case managers.

Issue: Reporting of Student Mental Health Outcomes
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-108
Effective: Took effect upon the Governor's signature on May 30, 2025.

(HB 969 Rep. Cassel and SB 1310 Sen. Bradley)

This bill directs OPPAGA to evaluate school districts' compliance with mental health assistance programs and the services provided to students. An initial report is due by December 31, 2025, and a final report by December 1, 2026, to the Governor, Senate President, and House Speaker. The evaluations must address school district compliance with the statewide behavioral threat management operational process, an assessment of treatment outcomes and system capacity, and identification of other data needed from the mental health assistance programs.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill strengthens accountability and transparency in student mental health services throughout Florida's schools by enhancing the evaluation and oversight of mental health programs and ensuring the effective allocation of resources to support students in need.



FSA President, Sheriff Bill Prummell, Sheriff Michelle Cook, and Sheriff Gordon Smith present Senator Jennifer Bradley with FSA's Friend of the Sheriff Award for her outstanding work during the 2024 legislative session.

Issue: School District Reporting Requirements
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-26
Effective: July 1, 2025.



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(SB 1374 Sen. Yarborough and HB 1287 by Rep. Robinson)

The bill requires district school boards to adopt a policy to temporarily remove instructional personnel from the classroom within 24 hours of a self-report or notification by law enforcement of an arrest for a felony or a misdemeanor offense listed in s. 435.04(2), F.S. **The bill expands the offenses that require notification to schools by law enforcement after the arrest of a school employee to include misdemeanor offenses under Level 2 background screening.** Instructional and administrative staff must self-report within 48 hours any felony or disqualifying misdemeanor offense. This includes any conviction, guilty plea, no contest plea, withheld adjudication, or entry into a pretrial diversion program for any criminal offense other than a traffic violation.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will support student safety and ensure there are guardrails in place to ensure teachers that have committed sexual crimes or crimes involving children are quickly removed. Sheriff's offices should ensure they notify the school district superintendent within 48 hours when a school employee is arrested for a felony, or a misdemeanor involving the abuse of a minor child, the sale of possession of a controlled substance, **or a misdemeanor involving an offense under s. 435.04(2).**

Administration

Issue: Retirement

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-205

Effective: July 1, 2025

(SB 7022 Senate Governmental Oversight and Accountability)

The bill establishes the contribution rates paid by employers that participate in the Florida Retirement System (FRS) beginning July 1, 2025. These rates are intended to fund the full normal cost and the amortization of the unfunded actuarial liability of the FRS and the impact of changes made by the bill.

The rates for state fiscal year 2025-2026 are:

Membership Class	Effective July 1, 2025				
	Normal Cost	UAL Rate	Admin	HIS	Total
Regular	7.10%	4.87%	0.06%	2.00%	14.03%
Special Risk	20.10%	13.03%	0.06%	2.00%	35.19%
Special Risk Admin Support	10.88%	26.54%	0.06%	2.00%	39.48%
Elected Officers-County Officers	11.79%	40.72%	0.06%	2.00%	54.57%
Senior Management	8.73%	22.45%	0.06%	2.00%	33.24%
DROP	9.37%	10.65%	N/A	2.00%	22.02%



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Impact to Sheriffs: Sheriffs should ensure they account for the increases in the FRS rates during their budget preparations.

Issue: State Courts System
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-163
Effective: July 1, 2025.

(HB 813 Rep. Tuck and SB 538 Sen. Bradley)

This bill clarifies that each judicial circuit with more than one circuit judge must designate a duty judge to be available on the weekends and holidays and allows for remote hearings.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will increase efficiency in state court operations.

Issue: Service of Process
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-13
Effective: Took effect upon the Governor's signature on April 29, 2025.

(HB 157 Rep. Redondo and SB 576 Sen. Leek)

The bill amends the statutory requirements for service of process on certain entities to resolve ambiguities that have arisen since Chapter 48, Florida Statutes, was amended in 2022. Although the 2022 law has since been applied by practitioners and the courts without significant problems, a task force of the Business Law Section of The Florida Bar has identified certain ways that the law can be improved as detailed below.

The bill extends registered agent office hours by two hours (now 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.) and allows service on an employee if the agent is unavailable. It permits personal service on a receiver for businesses in receivership and clarifies that substituted service through the Secretary of State is allowed when parties are nonresidents or hiding their location, if reasonable efforts to serve them have been made and an affidavit of compliance is filed. Former Florida residents engaged in in-state business are also deemed to have appointed the Secretary of State as their agent for service. Lastly, the law validates service of process made between January 2, 2023, and October 1, 2025, provided it has not been invalidated by a court, regardless of whether service was effectuated under the amendments made to ch. 48, F.S., in 2022, or complied with prior law.

Impact to Sheriffs: Sheriffs and any third-party process servers they employ should be fully informed of the changes to the law, which provides clarification on serving registered agents and businesses in receivership.

Issue: Electronic Delivery of Notices Between Landlords and Tenants
Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-16
Effective: July 1, 2025.



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(HB 615 Rep. Esposito and SB 1164 Sen. Leek)

The bill allows landlords and tenants to electronically deliver notices via email if both parties agree and sign an addendum to the rental agreement.

Impact to Sheriffs: Deputies should be aware that landlords may now email notices, such as a termination of a rental agreement to a tenant if the tenant and landlord both agree in writing.

Issue: **Public Records/Lethality Assessment Forms**

Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-89**

Effective: *Took effect upon the Governor's signature on May 23, 2025.*

(HB 1479 Rep. Baker and SB 1640 Sen. Grall)

The bill makes confidential and exempt from public records a lethality assessment form which contains a victim's information and responses to the lethality assessment.

Impact to Sheriffs: Sheriffs should ensure all completed lethality assessment forms are kept confidential and exempt beginning January 1, 2025. The forms may still be shared with domestic violence centers and the state attorney's office.

Issue: **Ethics**

Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-85**

Effective: *July 1, 2025.*

(HB 399 Rep. Maney and SB 348 Sen. Gaetz)

The bill creates new standards of conduct in the Code of Ethics for public officers and public employees relating to "stolen valor." Specifically, the bill prohibits candidates, public officials, and employees from knowingly making false or misleading claims—directly or indirectly—for personal gain about military service. It also bans the unauthorized wearing of military uniforms, medals, and insignia. Under the bill, any candidate, elected or appointed public officer, or public employee who violates these prohibitions, is subject to penalties provided in s. 112.317, F.S., including civil penalties and restitution penalties.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill serves to safeguard veterans and the public from misleading representations of military service by candidates, state officials, or public employees.

Issue: **Public Records/Public Officers**

Outcome: **Passed. Chapter No. 2025-195**

Effective: *July 1, 2025.*

(HB 789 Rep. Valdés and SB 268 Sen. Jones)

The bill creates a public record exemption for certain personal identifying and location information of current congressional members and public officers, as well as their spouses and children. A public officer includes the Governor, Attorney General, Agriculture Commissioner, state legislator, property appraiser,



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supervisor of elections, school superintendent, school board member, mayor, city commissioner, or county commissioner.

Impact to Sheriffs: Sheriffs should ensure the above-referenced information is exempt from public records.

Issue: OGSR/Public Safety Communication Systems

Outcome: Passed. Chapter No. 2025-90

Effective: Took effect upon the Governor's signature on May 23, 2025.

(HB 7009 Rep. Conerly and SB 7006 Senate Regulated Industries)

The bill expands the public record and public meeting exemptions for certain records and information related to the 911, E911, and public safety radio communication system infrastructure to include NG911 infrastructure. Under the expanded exemption, all building plans, blueprints, schematic drawings and diagrams in draft, preliminary and final form that depict structural elements such as towers, antennas, equipment or facilities are protected, as are geographical maps showing actual or proposed infrastructure locations.

Impact to Sheriffs: The bill will reduce exposure to security threats and protect the public by protecting information related to NG911 infrastructure. Sheriffs should ensure all records that specify NG911 infrastructure are exempt beginning May 23, 2025.

Administration Bills that Failed:

Issue: Rural Communities

Outcome: Failed. Died in messages.

(SB 110 Sen. Simon)

The bill would have boosted rural communities through a broad set of reforms spanning economic growth, infrastructure, education, and healthcare.

Issue: Sovereign Immunity

Outcome: Failed. Died in messages.

(HB 301 Rep. McFarland and SB 1570 Sen. DiCeglie)

The bill would have increased the statutory caps on judgments against the state or an agency or subdivision.

Issue: County Commissioner Term Limits and District School Boards

Outcome: Failed. Died on the House Calendar.

(HB 679 Rep. Salzman and SB 802 Sen. Ingoglia)



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The bill would have provided 8-year term limits for members of a county commission and district school boards.

Issue: Disclosure of Public Servants' Personal Information

Outcome: Failed. Died in committee.

(HB 1453 Rep. Oliver and SB 1610 Sen. Burgess)

The bill would have allowed public servants in Florida to prevent data brokers from disclosing their personal information.

Issue: Public Officers and Employees

Outcome: Failed. Vetoed by the Governor.

(HB 1445 Rep. Mayfield and SB 1760 Sen. Grall)

The bill would have established new standards for public employees, lobbying practices, and eligibility for certain public offices in Florida.