

**STORAGE NAME:** h0687.ca

**DATE:** March 5, 1997

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON  
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS  
BILL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT - LOCAL LEGISLATION**

**BILL #:** HB 687

**RELATING TO:** Alachua County Sheriff

**SPONSOR(S):** Representative Casey

**COMPANION BILL(S):** None.

**ORIGINATING COMMITTEE(S)/COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERENCE:**

- (1) COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
  - (2) GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS
  - (3)
  - (4)
  - (5)
- 

**I. SUMMARY:**

The bill reenacts the Alachua County Sheriff's Civil Service Act. It grants public employee status to persons employed by the Alachua County Sheriff who do not otherwise have that right pursuant to law. Additionally, the bill grants collective bargaining rights and public employee status to all full-time deputy sheriffs employed by the Alachua County Sheriffs Office.

The bill eliminates the requirement that an employee placed on disciplinary probation for a period of 6 months or more, be required to complete 1 calendar year of service from the date of the action before being granted the right to appeal personnel disciplinary actions or decisions.

The bill further provides that notice of an appeal of an action must be received by the Sheriff no later than 15 working days after the employee is notified of the action, and that a Career Service Appeals Board be selected and meet for purposes of hearing the appeal no later than 30 working days after receipt of an appeal by the Sheriff. Additionally, the bill provides that all complaints may be reviewed by the Sheriff.

The Economic Impact Statement estimates the bill will cause no adverse economic impacts.

II. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS:

A. PRESENT SITUATION:

Currently, Alachua County deputy sheriffs are not considered public employees and do not have the right to collectively bargain. Additionally, employees who are placed on disciplinary probation for a period of 6 months or more must complete 1 calendar year of service before being granted the right to appeal any personnel disciplinary action or decision. The Sheriff must review all complaints filed by his employees.

Notice of appeal of an action must be received by the Sheriff within 3 working days after the employee is notified of the action, and a Career Service Appeals Board must be established within 15 working days after receipt of an appeal by the Sheriff.

**BACKGROUND**

**COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE SPECIAL ACTS**

A similar bill was introduced during the 1996 legislative session. HB 2641 was introduced by Representative Casey and died in the House Committee on Community Affairs.

The current civil service system for commissioned and noncommissioned employees of the Alachua County Sheriff's Office was created by chapter 84-388, Laws of Florida, and has been amended once by chapter 86-342, Laws of Florida.

The enabling act, chapter 84-388, Laws of Florida, was declared unconstitutional because of a flawed newspaper advertisement. (See Hindery v. Department of State, etc., 13 Fla. Supp. 2d 18). Subsequently, chapter 86-342, Laws of Florida, was passed by the Legislature and has not been amended since that time.

As discussed below, general law and pertinent case law support the proposition that deputy sheriffs are not considered "public employees" unless legislative expression declares them to be. Therefore, they are not granted the right to collectively bargain unless legislative expression grants them the privilege to do so. Deputy sheriffs are **appointed** rather than **employed** by sheriffs.

**RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF LAW**

**Subsection 447.203(3), Florida Statutes**, provides, in part:

"Public employee" means any person employed by a public employer except:

(a) Those persons appointed by the Governor or elected by the people, agency heads, and members of boards and commissions.

(b) Those individuals acting as negotiating representatives for employer authorities.

(c) Those persons holding positions by appointment or employment in the organized militia.

- (d) Those persons who are designated by the commission as managerial or confidential employees pursuant to certain criteria.
- (e) Those persons holding positions of employment with the Florida Legislature.
- (f) Those persons who have been convicted of a crime and are inmates confined to institutions within the state.
- (g) Those persons appointed to inspection positions in federal/state fruit and vegetable inspection service.
- (h) Those persons employed by Public Employees Relations Commission [PERC].
- (i) Those persons enrolled as graduate students in the State University System.
- (j) Those persons who by virtue of their positions of employment are regulated by the Florida Supreme Court.

“Managerial employees” are defined in subsection 447.203(4), Florida Statutes, to include police chiefs, fire chiefs, or directors of public safety of any police, fire, or public safety department. Other police officers, as defined in subsection 943.10(1), Florida Statutes, and firefighters, as defined in subsection 633.30(1), Florida Statutes, *may* be determined by PERC to be managerial employees of such departments. According to statute, in making such determinations, PERC considers, in addition to the criteria established in paragraph 447.203(4)(a), Florida Statutes, the paramilitary organizational structure of the department involved.

The intent section of chapter 447, Florida Statutes, does not reveal any legislative intent to include *appointed* deputy sheriffs within the definition of “public employee.”

**Chapter 30, Florida Statutes**, provides in part:

“Deputy sheriff” means a law enforcement officer ***appointed*** by the sheriff and certified under chapter 943. . . . (Emphasis added.)

**Part VI, chapter 112, Florida Statutes**, provides, in part, that all law enforcement officers and correctional officers are entitled to certain protections, rights, and privileges. Within the definition of section 112.531, Florida Statutes, deputy sheriffs are considered law enforcement officers. However, section 112.535, Florida Statutes, provides:

The provisions of chapter 93-19, Laws of Florida, shall not be construed to restrict or otherwise limit the discretion of the sheriff to take any disciplinary action, without limitation, against a deputy sheriff, including the demotion, reprimand, suspension, or dismissal thereof, nor to limit the right of the sheriff to appoint deputy sheriffs or to withdraw their appointment as provided in chapter 30. Neither shall be provisions of chapter 93-19, Laws of Florida, ***be construed to grant collective bargaining rights to deputy sheriffs*** or to provide them with a property interest or continued expectancy in their appointment as a deputy sheriff. (Emphasis added.)

**Relevant Court Case**

In Murphy v. Mack, 358 So. 2d 822 (Fla 1978), partially affirming 341 So. 2d 1008 (1st DCA 1977), the court found:

. . . Since deputy sheriffs have not been identified as employees by the courts of this state, we cannot assume that the Legislature intended to include them within the definition of public employee without express language to this effect. In the absence of language including deputy sheriffs within the definition set forth in Chapter 447, Florida Statutes (1975), we find that they are not encompassed by the act. . . .

The court went on to say:

. . . Accordingly, we hold that a sheriff is a “public employer” within the definition of chapter 447, Florida Statutes (1975), but that a deputy sheriff is not a “public employee” within the contemplation of said act. . . .

**B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:**

The bill reenacts the Alachua County Sheriff’s Civil Service Act. It grants public employee status to persons employed by the Alachua County Sheriff’s Office and grants collective bargaining rights to all Alachua County deputy sheriffs.

Employees who have been placed on disciplinary probation for a period of 6 months or more will no longer be required to complete 1 calendar year of service from the date of the action, before being granted the right to appeal disciplinary or employment decisions.

The time-frame for employees to file a notice of appeal is extended from 3 working days, to 15 working days after the employee is notified of the action upon which the appeal is based. Additionally, the time-frame for the selection of a Career Service Appeals Board has been extended from 15 working days to 30 working days after receipt of an appeal by the Sheriff. Those serving on the Career Service Appeals Board will be considered to be working a regular work day.

The Sheriff will no longer be required to review all complaints filed, but may review them at his discretion.

**C. LAWS OF FLORIDA/FLORIDA STATUTES AFFECTED:**

Chapter 84-388, Laws of Florida, as amended.  
Chapter 86-342, Laws of Florida.

**D. APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES:**

1. Less Government:

a. Does the bill create, increase or reduce, either directly or indirectly:

(1) any authority to make rules or adjudicate disputes?

No.

(2) any new responsibilities, obligations or work for other governmental or private organizations or individuals?

No.

(3) any entitlement to a government service or benefit?

No.

b. If an agency or program is eliminated or reduced:

Not applicable.

(1) what responsibilities, costs and powers are passed on to another program, agency, level of government, or private entity?

(2) what is the cost of such responsibility at the new level/agency?

(3) how is the new agency accountable to the people governed?

2. Lower Taxes:

a. Does the bill increase anyone's taxes?

No.

b. Does the bill require or authorize an increase in any fees?

No.

c. Does the bill reduce total taxes, both rates and revenues?

No.

d. Does the bill reduce total fees, both rates and revenues?

No.

e. Does the bill authorize any fee or tax increase by any local government?

No.

3. Personal Responsibility:

- a. Does the bill reduce or eliminate an entitlement to government services or subsidy?

No.

- b. Do the beneficiaries of the legislation directly pay any portion of the cost of implementation and operation?

Not applicable.

4. Individual Freedom:

- a. Does the bill increase the allowable options of individuals or private organizations/associations to conduct their own affairs?

Yes. It gives Alachua County Deputy Sheriffs the right to collectively bargain.

- b. Does the bill prohibit, or create new government interference with, any presently lawful activity?

No.

5. Family Empowerment:

- a. If the bill purports to provide services to families or children:

Not applicable.

(1) Who evaluates the family's needs?

(2) Who makes the decisions?

(3) Are private alternatives permitted?

(4) Are families required to participate in a program?

(5) Are families penalized for not participating in a program?

- b. Does the bill directly affect the legal rights and obligations between family members?

Not applicable.

- c. If the bill creates or changes a program providing services to families or children, in which of the following does the bill vest control of the program, either through direct participation or appointment authority:

Not applicable.

(1) parents and guardians?

(2) service providers?

(3) government employees/agencies?

**E. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS:**

**Section 1:** Amends chapter 84-388, Laws of Florida, as amended by chapter 86-342, Laws of Florida, to provide:

Section 1 (1). Grants public employee status to persons employed by the Alachua County Sheriff's Office and eliminates the language denying collective bargaining rights for public employees.

Section 1(2)(a). Eliminates the requirement that employees placed on disciplinary probation for a period of 6 months or more be required to complete 1 calendar year of service from the date of the action, before being granted the right to appeal personnel disciplinary actions or decisions.

Section 2(2). Provides that service on a Career Service Appeals Board will be considered a regular work day for those selected to serve.

Section 2(3)(a). Changes the time-frame within which the Sheriff must receive a notice of appeal from 3 working days to 15 working days after the employee is notified of the action upon which the appeal is based.

Section 2(3)(b). Changes the time-frame within which the members of a Career Services Appeals Board must be selected and meet, from 15 working days to 30 working days after receipt of an appeal by the Sheriff.

Section 3(2)(b). Gives the Sheriff the discretion to determine whether he wants to review filed complaints.

Section 6. Grants collective bargaining rights and public employee status to all full-time Alachua County deputy sheriffs.

**Section 2:** Provides an effective date upon becoming a law.

III. NOTICE/REFERENDUM AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS:

A. NOTICE PUBLISHED? Yes  No

IF YES, WHEN? January 23, 24, & 25, 1997

WHERE? The Gainesville Sun, Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida

B. REFERENDUM(S) REQUIRED? Yes  No

IF YES, WHEN?

C. LOCAL BILL CERTIFICATION FILED? Yes, attached  No

D. ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT FILED? Yes, attached  No

IV. COMMENTS:

The Florida Police Benevolent Association supports this bill.

The Florida Sheriff's Association strongly opposes this bill because they believe (1) collective bargaining ability will raise the tax burden imposed on citizens, due to increased salaries; (2) Sheriffs will have less flexibility in terminating "rogue" police officers; and (3) deputy sheriffs are "representatives" of the Sheriff, and the Sheriff is responsible for their actions. Collective bargaining ability will decrease the control Sheriffs have over their representative.

The Alachua County Sheriff strongly opposes this bill because he believes having a union would be cumbersome and would create a division between the elected Sheriff and his employees. He stated the bill would make the Sheriff's office less responsive to voters because compliance with union contracts, not just the will of the voters, would be factored into decision making. He stated there are adequate employee safeguards in place, such as career service, permanent employee status after one year, and a prohibition against political firings.

Four other special acts have granted public employee status to deputy sheriffs and specifically grant them the right to collectively bargain.

- ◆ Dade County by its home rule charter provisions;
- ◆ Chapter 70-966, Laws of Florida, a special act providing for Volusia County's Charter;
- ◆ Chapter 89-491, Laws of Florida, a special act providing for Escambia County's Civil Service Act;
- ◆ Chapter 92-341, Laws of Florida, a special act recodifying the charter for the City of Jacksonville, Duval County; and
- ◆ Chapter 93-370, Laws of Florida, providing for Broward County's Sheriff's Office Career Service System.



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The charter for Alachua County states that Alachua County has the all home rule powers afforded by the constitution and laws of the State of Florida to charter counties.

**House Rule 92(a), provides that “if a committee determines that a local bill may be enacted into law under the authority of a local governing body, that committee shall not report the bill to the Clerk.” The purposes of this local bill could be accomplished by a local ordinance *but* would require that the special acts related to the career service system be repealed by the Legislature and be converted to local ordinances.**

**The ordinances are then subject to modification or repeal by the local governing body as are other local ordinances. The entire contents of the act remain in full force and effect during the conversion process.**

V. AMENDMENTS OR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES:

To correct a bill drafting error, on page 2, line 28, strike “just”.

To correct a bill drafting error, on page 11, line 9, strike “Section 7” and insert “Section 2”.

VI. SIGNATURES:

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY AFFAIRS:

Prepared by:

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