

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FINAL BILL ANALYSIS

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BILL #: CS/HB 751	COMPANION BILL: CS/SB 1160 (Leek)
TITLE: Law Enforcement, Correctional, and Correctional Probation Officer Benefits	LINKED BILLS: None
SPONSOR(S): Sapp, Bartleman	RELATED BILLS: None

FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION: 111Y's 0N's **GOVERNOR'S ACTION:** Pending

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

The bill expands employer-paid health insurance benefits to cover law enforcement, correctional, and correctional probation officers who are catastrophically injured during an official training exercise or in the line of duty.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

The bill may result in a negative fiscal impact on the state and local governments. The fiscal impact is indeterminate at this time, as it depends on the number of full-time law enforcement, correctional, and correctional probation officers that sustain a catastrophic injury during an official training exercise or in the line of duty.

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ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

The bill requires public employers to pay the full premium of [health insurance coverage](#) for law enforcement, correctional, and correctional probation officers who sustain a catastrophic injury during an official [training](#) exercise. It also expands eligibility for coverage by removing the current requirement that qualifying injuries occur as a result of the officer's response to fresh pursuit, an emergency, or an unlawful act committed by another and, instead, provides coverage for all qualifying injuries sustained in the line of duty. The coverage includes the injured full-time officer and his or her spouse and dependent children. (Section [2](#))

The bill designates the act as the "[Deputy Andy Lahera Act](#)." (Section [1](#))

The bill declares that it fulfills an important state interest. (Section [3](#))

Subject to the Governor's veto powers, the effective date of this bill is July 1, 2025. (Section [4](#))

FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

STATE GOVERNMENT:

The bill may result in a negative fiscal impact on the state. The fiscal impact is indeterminate at this time, as it depends on the number of full-time criminal justice officers who sustain a catastrophic injury during an official training exercise or in the line of duty.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

The bill may result in a negative fiscal impact on local governments. The fiscal impact is indeterminate at this time, as it depends on the number of full-time criminal justice officers who sustain a catastrophic injury during an official training exercise or in the line of duty.

STORAGE NAME: h0751z.GOS

DATE: 5/5/2025

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Criminal Justice Officer Training

In Florida, law enforcement, correctional, and correctional probation officers must meet specific training requirements to become certified and maintain their certification. These standards are established by the Criminal Justice and Training Commission (CJSTC), which operates under the Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE).¹

Before becoming certified, candidates must complete a CJSTC-approved Basic Recruit Training Program specific to their criminal justice discipline.² This program provides foundational knowledge and skills necessary for the respective roles.³ After completing the program, candidates must pass the State Officer Certification Examination for their discipline.⁴ The examination assesses the candidate's knowledge and proficiency in the required competencies. As part of the certification process, criminal justice agencies conduct background investigations and submit an Officer Certification Application on the candidate's behalf.⁵ The CJSTC reviews the application to verify that all minimum qualifications have been met.

Certified officers must complete continuing education and training to maintain their certification.⁶ This includes periodic retraining in areas such as legal updates, defensive tactics, firearms proficiency, and other relevant topics to ensure officers remain knowledgeable and effective in their duties.⁷

Individuals with prior qualifying experience—former officers from other states, federal agencies, or the military—may be eligible for an Equivalency of Training process. This process allows candidates to demonstrate that their prior training and experience meet Florida standards without completing the full Basic Recruit Training Program. However, they must still demonstrate proficiency and pass the State Officer Certification Examination.⁸

Health Insurance Coverage for Criminal Justice Officers Who Sustain a Catastrophic Injury

Current law requires the employer of a full-time criminal justice officer who suffers a catastrophic injury⁹ in the line of duty to pay the full premium of the employer's health insurance plan¹⁰ for the injured officer, their spouse, and dependent children.¹¹ If the officer later dies from his or her injuries, the employer must continue covering the health insurance premiums for the surviving spouse until remarried and for the dependent children, until they turn 18 or, if they remain financially dependent, until the end of the calendar year in which they turn 25. In order

¹ See s. [943.11\(1\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

² S. [943.19\(9\), F.S.](#)

³ R. 11B-35.002(1), F.A.C.

⁴ See s. [943.19\(10\), F.S.](#); r. 11B-30.0062, F.A.C.

⁵ R. 11B-27.002, F.A.C.; see also FDLE, [Officer Requirements How to Become a Certified Officer in Florida](#) (last visited March 27, 2025); s. [943.133\(3\), F.S.](#)

⁶ See s. [943.135\(1\), F.S.](#)

⁷ See r. 11B-27.00212, F.A.C.

⁸ S. [943.131\(2\), \(3\), and \(4\), F.S.](#)

⁹ "Catastrophic injury" means a permanent impairment constituted by: spinal cord injury involving severe paralysis of an arm, a leg, or the trunk; amputation of an arm, a hand, a foot, or a leg involving the effective loss of use of that appendage; severe brain or closed-head injury; second-degree or third-degree burns of 25 percent or more of the total body surface or third-degree burns of 5 percent or more to the face and hands; total or industrial blindness; or any other injury of a nature and severity that would qualify an employee to receive disability income benefits under Title II or supplemental security income benefits under Title XVI of the federal Social Security Act as the Social Security Act existed on July 1, 1992. S. [440.02\(38\), F.S.](#) (2002).

¹⁰ Local governments may provide and fund group insurance, including health, life, accident, and hospitalization coverage, for their employees and dependents, either through private insurers, self-insurance, or risk management consortiums, subject to competitive bidding. S. [112.08\(2\)\(a\), F.S.](#) The state offers the state group insurance program, which covers health, life, accident, and hospitalization, for eligible state employees, retirees, and their dependents. S. [110.123, F.S.](#) The term "health insurance plan" does not include supplemental benefits that are not part of the basic group health insurance plan. S. [112.19\(2\)\(h\)1., F.S.](#)

¹¹ S. [112.19\(2\)\(h\)1., F.S.](#) A person who qualifies for such benefit is ineligible to receive the health insurance subsidy provided in ch. [121](#), [175](#), or [185](#), F.S. In addition, health insurance benefits received from other sources will reduce the amount of employer-paid benefits available to the firefighter and their dependents. S. [112.19\(2\)\(h\)1.a. and 2., F.S.](#)

to qualify for this benefit, the officer's catastrophic injury must have resulted from responding in fresh pursuit, to an emergency, or to an unlawful act committed by another.¹²

It is a first-degree misdemeanor to knowingly make or assist in the making of false or misleading statements to obtain the health insurance benefit.¹³ In addition to criminal penalties, any criminal justice officer or beneficiary convicted of such fraud must forfeit the health insurance benefits and reimburse the employer for any benefits improperly received.¹⁴

Deputy Andy Lahera

Deputy Andy Lahera is a 15-year veteran of the Citrus County Sheriff's Office and served as a school resource officer.¹⁵ On May 23, 2023, while directing traffic after the Lecanto High School graduation ceremony, he was struck by a vehicle, resulting in severe injuries, including a traumatic brain injury.¹⁶ As of February 12, 2025, Deputy Lahera remains in a medical facility, requiring extensive care on his path to recovery.¹⁷ In recognition of his service and resilience, the Citrus County Commission honored Deputy Lahera with a proclamation acknowledging his dedication to the community.¹⁸

¹² S. [112.19\(2\)\(h\)2., F.S.](#)

¹³ S. [112.19\(2\)\(h\)1.b., F.S.](#) A first degree misdemeanor is punishable by imprisonment not to exceed one year and a fine not to exceed \$1,000. *See* ss. [775.082](#) and [775.083, F.S.](#)

¹⁴ S. [112.19\(2\)\(h\)1.c., F.S.](#)

¹⁵ Florida Politics, [Deputy's wife skewers Citrus Sheriff Mike Prendergast over treatment of injured husband](#) (last visited March 27, 2025).

¹⁶ Citrus County Chronicle, ['Not done waiting for our miracle' – Michelle Lahera gives update on husband Andy, deputy injured in 2023](#) (last visited March 27, 2025).

¹⁷ *See id.*

¹⁸ Fox 13 Tampa Bay, [Critically injured Citrus County deputy honored for service amid family's health care concerns](#) (last visited March 27, 2025).