

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice

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BILL: SB 524

INTRODUCER: Senator Simon

SUBJECT: Department of Law Enforcement

DATE: January 20, 2026      REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1. Vaughan	Stokes	CJ	<b>Favorable</b>
2. Kolich	Harkness	ACJ	<b>Pre-meeting</b>
3. _____	_____	FP	_____

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### **I. Summary:**

SB 524 amends s. 406.02, F.S., to revise appointments and reappointments to the Medical Examiners Commission. The bill specifies that individuals appointed or reappointed by the Governor remain active until resignation, disqualification or a new member is appointed by the Governor.

Additionally, the Medical Examiners Commission must approve the appointment of district medical examiners by a majority vote to fill vacancies.

The bill amends s. 406.06, F.S., to transfer the authority to appoint district medical examiners from the Governor to the Medical Examiners Commission.

The bill amends s. 943.11, F.S., to specify that Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission (CJSTC) must act independently of any criminal justice agency. The Criminal Justice Professionalism Program is required to provide staff support for the commission.

The bill amends s. 943.1395, F.S., to revise the notification process for serving administrative complaints on a certified law enforcement, correctional, and correctional probation officer or instructor. The CJSTC staff must attempt notification via certified mail and via email, if possible. If proof of service is not provided, staff will attempt contact utilizing the last known telephone number and a notice to the licensee posted on the front page of the CJSTC's website.

The bill amends various sections of ch. 943. F.S., to provide that law enforcement officer curriculum is established by the CJSTC not the FDLE.

The bill does not have a fiscal impact on state government. See Section V., Fiscal Impact Statement.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

## II. Present Situation:

The FDLE provides statewide leadership, coordination, and administrative support for key public safety oversight bodies. The FDLE staffs and supports the CJSTC, which sets minimum employment and training standards for law enforcement, correctional, and correctional probation officers; administers certification and decertification processes; and oversees officer training curricula and compliance. The FDLE also staffs and supports the Medical Examiners Commission, which oversees Florida's district medical examiner system, promotes consistent medicolegal death investigation practices, and ensures statewide standards and accountability for death investigations.

### Medical Examiners

Florida medical examiners are local district officers appointed by the Governor to one of 25 medical examiner districts under ch. 406, F.S.<sup>1</sup> The Medical Examiners Act was enacted by the 1970 Legislature in order to establish minimum and uniform standards of excellence in statewide medical examiner services.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Medical Examiners Commission*

Medical examiners are governed by the Medical Examiners Commission, which is administratively housed within the FDLE. The commission consists of nine members who serve four-year terms and are selected as follows:

- Two physicians licensed pursuant to ch. 458, F.S., or ch. 459, F.S., and who are active district medical examiners (appointed by the Governor);
- One member who is a funeral director licensed pursuant to ch. 497, F.S., (appointed by the Governor);
- One state attorney (appointed by the Governor);
- One public defender (appointed by the Governor);
- One sheriff (appointed by the Governor); and
- One county commissioner (appointed by the Governor)
- The Attorney General or her or his designated representative.
- The State Surgeon General or her or his designated representative.<sup>3</sup>

Upon the expiration of the terms of office, the Governor must appoint two members for terms of 4 years, two members for terms of 3 years, two members for terms of 2 years, and one member for a term of 1 year. An appointment to fill a vacancy must be for the unexpired portion of the term.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 406.06, F.S.

<sup>2</sup> Florida Department of Law Enforcement, *Medical Examiners Commission*, available at <https://www.fdle.state.fl.us/MEC/MEC-Home> (last visited January 15, 2026).

<sup>3</sup> Section 406.02, F.S.

### ***District medical examiners***

District medical examiners are appointed by the Governor for each medical examiner district from nominees who are practicing physicians in pathology, whose nominations are submitted to the Governor by the Medical Examiners Commission. The term of office of each district medical examiner is 3 years. An appointment to fill a vacancy must be for the unexpired portion of the term.<sup>4</sup> Current law requires district medical examiners to determine the cause of death in certain circumstances and to make any investigations, examinations, and autopsies necessary to make that determination as he or she shall deem necessary or as requested by the state attorney.<sup>5</sup>

### **Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission (CJSTC)**

The CJSTC is established under s. 943.11, F.S. The CJSTC is an independent policy making body that ensures that Florida's criminal justice officers are ethical, qualified, and well-trained. The CJSTC is responsible for creating entry-level curricula and certification testing for criminal justice officers in Florida, establishing minimum standards for employment and certification, and revoking the certification of officers who fail to maintain these minimum standards of conduct.<sup>6</sup>

An individual must be at least 19 years of age to become a certified law enforcement officer or a certified correctional probation officer and must be at least 18 years of age to become a certified correctional officer. Additionally, the individual must be a citizen of the United States, may not have been convicted of a felony or received a dishonorable discharge from the military, must pass a physical exam, and have good moral character as determined by a background investigation. Certification as a law enforcement officer or correctional officer requires a high school diploma or equivalent (GED). Certification as a correctional probation officer requires a bachelor's degree.<sup>7,8</sup>

### ***Investigations of Law Enforcement Officers***

The CJSTC may initiate disciplinary action against a certified officer when there is a finding that the officer has failed to maintain compliance with statutory requirements, including good moral character standards<sup>9</sup> or other grounds for revocation.<sup>10</sup> An administrative complaint can be served after the CJSTC completes its investigation and a probable cause panel determines that sufficient grounds exist to proceed. The CJSTC is authorized to impose penalties such as revocation, suspension, probation, retraining, or reprimand in accordance with disciplinary guidelines adopted by rule.

Every law enforcement agency and correctional agency must establish and put into operation a system for the receipt, investigation, and determination of complaints received from any person.

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<sup>4</sup> Section 406.06, F.S.

<sup>5</sup> Section 406.11, F.S.

<sup>6</sup> Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Criminal Justice Professionalism Division, *Overview of the Professionalism Division*, <https://www.fdle.state.fl.us/CJSTC/Overview.aspx> (last visited January 15, 2026).

<sup>7</sup> Florida Department of Law Enforcement, *Criminal Justice Professionalism Services Officer Requirements How To Become a Certified Officer in Florida*, <https://www.fdle.state.fl.us/cjstc/officer-requirements/how-to-become-an-officer> (last visited January 15, 2026).

<sup>8</sup> Section 943.1395, F.S.

<sup>9</sup> Section 943.1395(7), F.S.

<sup>10</sup> Section 943.13(4), F.S.

This must be the procedure for investigating a complaint against a law enforcement and correctional officer determining whether to proceed with disciplinary action or to file disciplinary charges.<sup>11</sup> When law enforcement or correctional agency personnel prepare an investigative report or summary, the person preparing the report must, at the time the report is completed verify that the contents are true and accurate based on the person's personal knowledge, information, and belief and include a specific statement.<sup>12, 13</sup>

### ***Officer Bill of Rights***

Law enforcement officers' and correctional officers' rights are outlined in the Florida Statutes, these are commonly referred to as, "law enforcement officers' bill of rights."<sup>14,15</sup> Whenever a law enforcement officer or correctional officer is under investigation and subject to interrogation by members of his or her agency for any reason that could lead to disciplinary action, suspension, demotion, or dismissal, the interrogation must be conducted under the following conditions:

- The interrogation must be conducted at a reasonable hour;
- The interrogation must take place either at the office of the command of the investigating officer or at the local precinct, police unit, or correctional unit in which the incident allegedly occurred;
- The officer under investigation must be informed of the rank, name, and command of the officer in charge of the investigation, the interrogating officer, and all persons present during the interrogation. All questions directed to the officer under interrogation must be asked by or through one interrogator during any one interrogation;
- The officer must be informed of the nature of the investigation before any interrogation begins, and must be informed of the names of all complainants;
- Interrogating sessions must be for reasonable periods and must be timed to allow for personal necessities and rest periods;
- The officer under interrogation may not be subjected to offensive language or be threatened with transfer, dismissal, or disciplinary action. A promise or reward may not be made as an inducement to answer questions;
- If the officer under interrogation is under arrest, or is likely to be placed under arrest, he or she must be completely informed of all his or her rights before commencing the interrogation; and
- At the request of the officer under investigation, he or she has the right to counsel, who must be present at all times during the interrogation.<sup>16</sup>

Under the bill of rights, a dismissal, demotion, transfer, reassignment, or other personnel action that might result in loss of pay or benefits or that might otherwise be considered a punitive measure may not be taken against any law enforcement officer or correctional officer unless the

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<sup>11</sup> Section s. 112.533, F.S.

<sup>12</sup> Section 112.533, F.S.

<sup>13</sup> Section 112.533(4)(a)2., F.S. "I, the undersigned, do hereby swear, under penalty of perjury, that, to the best of my personal knowledge, information, and belief, I have not knowingly or willfully deprived, or allowed another to deprive, the subject of the investigation of any of the rights contained in ss. 112.532 and 112.533, Florida Statutes."

<sup>14</sup> Section 112.532, F.S.

<sup>15</sup> Whenever a law enforcement officer or correctional officer is under investigation and subject to interrogation by members of his or her agency for any reason that could lead to disciplinary action, suspension, demotion, or dismissal, the interrogation must be conducted under certain conditions. Section 112.532, F.S.

<sup>16</sup> Section 112.532(1), F.S.

law enforcement officer or correctional officer is notified of the action and the reason or reasons for the action before the effective date of the action.<sup>17</sup> If the potential disciplinary action consists of suspension with loss of pay, demotion, or dismissal, the officer or the officer's representative must, upon request, be provided with a complete copy of the investigative file, including the final investigative report and all evidence, and with the opportunity to address the findings in the report with the employing law enforcement agency before imposing disciplinary action consisting of suspension with loss of pay, demotion, or dismissal. The contents of the complaint and investigation must remain confidential until such time as the employing law enforcement agency makes a final determination whether to issue a notice of disciplinary action consisting of suspension with loss of pay, demotion, or dismissal.<sup>18</sup>

No law enforcement officer or correctional officer may be discharged; disciplined; demoted; denied promotion, transfer, or reassignment; or otherwise discriminated against in regard to his or her employment or appointment, or be threatened with any such treatment, by reason of his or her exercise of the rights granted by this part.<sup>19</sup>

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

**Section 1** amends s. 406.02, F.S., to revise appointments and reappointments to the Medical Examiners Commission. The bill specifies that individuals appointed or reappointed by the Governor remain active until resignation, disqualification or a new member is appointed by the Governor.

Additionally, the Medical Examiners Commission must approve the appointment of medical examiners by a majority vote to fill vacancies.

**Section 2** amends s. 406.06, F.S., to transfer the authority to appoint district medical examiners from the Governor to the Medical Examiners Commission. A physician member of the Medical Examiners Commission is eligible to serve as a district medical examiner upon approval of the Medical Examiners Commission rather than approval of the Governor.

**Section 3** amends s. 943.11, F.S, to specify that Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission (CJSTC) must act independently of any criminal justice agency. The Criminal Justice Professionalism Program is required to provide staff support for the commission.

**Section 4** amends s. 943.1395, F.S., to revise the notification process for serving administrative complaints on a certified law enforcement, correctional, and correctional probation officer or instructor. The commission staff must provide service by certified mail and, if possible, by email. If proof of service is not provided, staff must call the last known telephone number of record and must cause a short notice to the licensee to be posted on the front page of the commission's website.

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<sup>17</sup> Section 112.532(4)(a), F.S.

<sup>18</sup> Section 112.532(4)(b), F.S.

<sup>19</sup> Section 112.532(5), F.S.

**Sections 5 through 8** amend ss. 943.1726, 943.17261, 943.1727, and 943.17299, F.S., respectively, to provide that specified law enforcement officer training is established by the CJSTC not the FDLE.

#### **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

##### **A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

The bill does not appear to require cities and counties to expend funds or limit their authority to raise revenue or receive state-shared revenues as specified by Article VII, s. 18, of the State Constitution.

##### **B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

None.

##### **C. Trust Funds Restrictions:**

None.

##### **D. State Tax or Fee Increases:**

None.

##### **E. Other Constitutional Issues:**

None.

#### **V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

##### **A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

##### **B. Private Sector Impact:**

None.

##### **C. Government Sector Impact:**

The FDLE advised the bill will not have a fiscal impact to state government.<sup>20</sup>

#### **VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

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<sup>20</sup> Florida Department of Law Enforcement, *2026 Agency Analysis - SB 524 Department of Law Enforcement*, (on file with the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice).

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 406.02, 406.06, 943.11, 943.1395, 943.1726, 943.17261, 943.1727, and 943.17299.

**IX. Additional Information:****A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

**B. Amendments:**

None.

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This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

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