

# FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

## BILL ANALYSIS

*This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.*

**BILL #:** [CS/HB 849](#)

**TITLE:** Commissions within the Department of Law

Enforcement

**SPONSOR(S):** Abbott

**COMPANION BILL:** [SB 524](#) (Simon)

**LINKED BILLS:** None

**RELATED BILLS:** None

### Committee References

[Criminal Justice](#)

15 Y, 0 N, As CS

[Justice Budget](#)

13 Y, 0 N

[Judiciary](#)

## SUMMARY

### Effect of the Bill:

The bill makes several changes related to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), including:

- Authorizing FDLE to adopt rules to implement the Florida Medal of Valor and Florida Blue/Red Heart Medal programs.
- Revising the appointment procedures for district medical examiners to authorize the Medical Examiners Commission (MEC), rather than the Governor, to make such appointments, and to specify that appointments to the MEC remain in effect until the appointee resigns, is no longer qualified, or is replaced by the Governor.
- Clarifying that the Criminal Justice Professionalism Program within FDLE is responsible for providing staff support to the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission (CJSTC);
- Specifying the method of service that FDLE is required to use when providing administrative complaints to specified officers and instructors; and
- Specifying that the CJSTC, rather than FDLE, is responsible for establishing certain training courses for law enforcement officers and correctional officers.

### Fiscal or Economic Impact:

The bill may have an insignificant positive impact on state expenditures.

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## ANALYSIS

### EFFECT OF THE BILL:

#### [Florida Medal of Valor and Florida Blue/Red Heart Medal](#)

The bill, effective upon becoming law, authorizes the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) to adopt rules to implement the Florida Medal of Valor and Florida Blue/Red Heart Medal programs. (Section [1](#))

#### [Medical Examiners](#)

The bill specifies that the term for an appointee or reappointee to the [Medical Examiners Commission](#) (MEC) is considered in force until the appointee resigns or no longer qualifies for the position or until the Governor appoints a new member. The bill also authorizes the MEC, rather than the Governor, to [appoint](#) district medical examiners by a majority vote and authorizes a physician member of the MEC to also serve as a district medical examiner upon appointment by the MEC, rather than the Governor. (Sections [2](#) and [3](#))

#### [Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission](#)

**STORAGE NAME:** h0849b.JUB

**DATE:** 1/29/2026

The bill specifies that the Criminal Justice Professionalism Program within FDLE must provide staff support to the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission (CJSTC), and also requires the CJSTC to act independently of any criminal justice agency. (Section [4](#))

The bill specifies that when CJSTC [serves an administrative complaint](#) related to a misconduct investigation on a certified law enforcement officer, correctional officer, or correctional probation officer, or instructor, that the service of such complaint must be made by certified mail to the officer's or instructor's last known address of record and, if possible, by email. If the CJSTC does not receive proof of service, the bill requires the CJSTC to call the officer's or instructor's last known telephone number of record and cause a short, plain notice to the certified officer or instructor to be posted on the front page of its website. (Section [5](#))

The bill revises several statutes related to law enforcement training to clarify that the CJSTC, rather than FDLE, is responsible for establishing and developing specified continued employment training courses, specifically, continued employment training courses related to diabetic emergencies, the medical use of marijuana, autism spectrum disorder, and Alzheimer's disease and related forms of dementia. (Sections [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), and [9](#))

The effective date of Section 2–10 of the bill is July 1, 2026. (Section [10](#))

## FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

### STATE GOVERNMENT:

The bill may have an insignificant positive impact on state expenditures by authorizing the CJSTC to provide service of specified administrative complaints on its website, rather than a newspaper, if service by certified mail is unsuccessful. FDLE estimates the average annual cost of newspaper advertising for such notices is approximately \$8,800, and does not estimate the bill will have any other fiscal impacts.<sup>1</sup>

## RELEVANT INFORMATION

### SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

#### [Florida Medal of Valor and Florida Blue/Red Heart Medal](#)

In 2025, the legislature created two honorary medals for first responders: the Florida Medal of Valor and the Florida Blue/Red Heart Medal.<sup>2</sup> The Florida Medal of Valor may be awarded only to a first responder<sup>3</sup> or related personnel who goes above and beyond the call of duty to save the life of an individual.<sup>4</sup> The Florida Blue/Red Heart Medal must be awarded to a law enforcement officer, correctional officer, correctional probation officer, or firefighter who is injured in the line of duty.<sup>5</sup>

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) is required to issue and administer the application process for these awards, which application must be made by a Florida resident or a potential recipient's employing agency.<sup>6</sup> An application for these awards must be considered by a five-member board, at least three of whom must be active, retired, or former law enforcement officers or firefighters.<sup>7</sup> FDLE does not currently have explicit rulemaking authority to implement the medal programs. As such, no medals have been awarded under either program.

<sup>1</sup> Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Agency Analysis of 2026 Senate Bill 524, p. 2 (Jan. 7, 2026) (on file with the House Criminal Justice Subcommittee).

<sup>2</sup> [S. 112.195, F.S.](#)

<sup>3</sup> "First responder" means a law enforcement officer as defined in [s. 943.10, F.S.](#), a firefighter as defined in [s. 633.102, F.S.](#), or an emergency medical technician or paramedic as defined in [s. 401.23, F.S.](#), employed by state or local government. A volunteer law enforcement officer, firefighter, or emergency medical technician or paramedic engaged by the state or a local government is also considered a first responder of the state or local government. [S. 112.1815\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>4</sup> [S. 112.195\(1\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>5</sup> [S. 112.195\(1\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>6</sup> [S. 112.195\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>7</sup> [S. 112.195\(3\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

## **Medical Examiners**

A district medical examiner is required to determine a person's cause of death in specified circumstances, including when requested by the state attorney or when a person dies:

- Of criminal violence.
- By accident.
- By suicide.
- Suddenly, when in apparent good health.
- Unattended by a practicing physician or other recognized practitioner.
- In any prison or penal institution.
- In police custody.
- In any suspicious or unusual circumstance.
- By criminal abortion.
- By poison.
- By disease constituting a threat to public health.
- By disease, injury, or toxic agent resulting from employment.<sup>8</sup>

A district medical examiner is authorized to make or perform such examinations, investigations, and autopsies as he or she deems necessary to make such a determination.<sup>9</sup>

## **Medical Examiners Commission**

The Medical Examiners Commission (MEC) within FDLE consists of nine persons, and includes seven members appointed by the Governor, one member appointed by the Attorney General, and one member appointed by the State Surgeon General.<sup>10</sup> Members of the MEC generally serve four year terms, and any appointment to fill a vacancy on the MEC is effective for the unexpired portion of such term.<sup>11</sup> The MEC is responsible for establishing medical examiner districts<sup>12</sup> and overseeing the distribution of state funds to the medical examiner districts.<sup>13</sup>

## **Appointment of Medical Examiners**

A district medical examiner is appointed by the Governor for each district from nominees who must be practicing physicians in pathology and whose nominations are submitted to the Governor by the MEC.<sup>14</sup> The term of office for each district medical examiner is three years.<sup>15</sup> According to FDLE, as of July 2025, 24 of the 25 district medical examiners were pending either initial appointment or reappointment, and the most recent gubernatorial appointment was made in 2023.<sup>16</sup>

## **Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission**

<sup>8</sup> [S. 406.11\(1\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>9</sup> [S. 406.11\(1\) and \(2\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>10</sup> [S. 406.02\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>11</sup> [S. 406.02\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>12</sup> There are currently 25 medical examiner districts. Florida Department of Law Enforcement, *Florida District Medical Examiners*, <https://www.fdle.state.fl.us/getContentAsset/a1fc5e21-5644-4846-a68b-30e60df79b7f/73aabf56-e6e5-4330-95a3-5f2a270a1d2b/DME-List-February-19-2025.pdf?language=en> (last visited Jan. 22, 2026).

<sup>13</sup> [Ss. 406.02\(4\) and 406.05, F.S.](#)

<sup>14</sup> [S. 406.06\(1\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*

<sup>16</sup> Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Agency Analysis of 2026 Senate Bill 524, p. 2 (Jan. 7, 2026) (on file with the House Criminal Justice Subcommittee).

The Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission (CJSTC) within FDLE is responsible for ensuring criminal justice officers in Florida are ethical, qualified, and well-trained.<sup>17</sup> Among its duties, the CJSTC is responsible for certifying and, when warranted, revoking the certification of law enforcement officers, correctional officers, and correctional probation officers, and may initiate investigations of such certified officers upon receipt of a verifiable complaint.<sup>18</sup> The CJSTC is also responsible for establishing uniform minimum employment and training standards for various criminal justice disciplines, including continued employment training.<sup>19</sup>

#### Service of Administrative Complaint

When the CJSTC conducts an investigation of an officer or instructor, it must serve an administrative complaint on such officer or instructor by personal service or certified mail, which affords reasonable notice of the facts or conduct which warrant disciplinary action and provides him or her with an adequate opportunity to request an administrative hearing.<sup>20</sup> If personal service cannot be made and the certified mail notice is returned undelivered, CJSTC must cause a short, plain notice to the officer or instructor to be published once each week for four consecutive weeks in a newspaper published in the county of the officer's or instructor's last known address.<sup>21</sup> If no newspaper is published in that county, the notice may be published in a newspaper of general circulation in that county.<sup>22</sup>

## BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
<a href="#">Criminal Justice Subcommittee</a>	15 Y, 0 N, As CS	1/20/2026	Hall	Padgett
THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:	Authorized FDLE to adopt rules to implement the Florida Medal of Valor and Florida Blue/Red Heart Medal programs.			
<a href="#">Justice Budget Subcommittee</a>	13 Y, 0 N	1/29/2026	Keith	Saag
<a href="#">Judiciary Committee</a>				

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**THIS BILL ANALYSIS HAS BEEN UPDATED TO INCORPORATE ALL OF THE CHANGES DESCRIBED ABOVE.**  
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<sup>17</sup> Florida Department of Law Enforcement, *Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission*, <https://www.fdle.state.fl.us/cjstc/commission> (last visited Jan. 22, 2026).

<sup>18</sup> [S. 943.12](#) and [943.1395, F.S.](#)

<sup>19</sup> [S. 943.12, F.S.](#) While the CJSTC is generally responsible for developing continued employment training, FDLE is currently required by statute to develop such training related to diabetic emergencies, the medical use of marijuana, autism spectrum disorder, and Alzheimer's disease and related forms of dementia. [Ss. 943.1726, 943.17261, 943.1727](#), and [943.17299, F.S.](#)

<sup>20</sup> [S. 120.60, F.S.](#)

<sup>21</sup> *Id.*

<sup>22</sup> *Id.*