

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BILL ANALYSIS

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BILL #: [HB 945](#)

TITLE: Statewide Counterintelligence and Counterterrorism Unit
SPONSOR(S): Alvarez, D.

COMPANION BILL: [SB 1712](#) (Martin)

LINKED BILLS: None

RELATED BILLS: None

Committee References

[Government Operations](#)

15 Y, 0 N

[Judiciary](#)

[Budget](#)

[State Affairs](#)

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

The bill creates a Statewide Counterterrorism and Counterintelligence Unit (unit) within the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) to proactively address terrorist threats, foreign intelligence activity, and insider threats. FDLE must create a 10-person team by July 1, 2027, to serve as the initial leadership and organizational core of the unit. Eventually, the unit will oversee seven teams that will operate out of FDLE's regional operational centers. The bill provides organizational requirements for each team and minimum experience requirements for team members.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

The bill will likely have a negative, indeterminate fiscal impact on the state due to increased FDLE personnel and operational costs.

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ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

The bill creates the Statewide Counterintelligence and Counterterrorism Unit (unit) within the [Florida Department of Law Enforcement](#) (FDLE) to proactively identify, monitor, and combat adversary intelligence entities,¹ international and domestic terrorists, insider threats, corporate threats, and other foreign adversaries. The unit is required to identify threats by analyzing patterns of life, gathering actionable intelligence, formulating effective plans of action, and by executing arrests or by revealing its intent to compel a response using all counterintelligence and counterterrorism tradecraft necessary to protect the state from adversary intelligence entities. Under the bill, the unit may conduct its missions alone or in coordination with other law enforcement agencies. (Section 1)

FDLE must create a 10-person team by July 1, 2027, to serve as an initial leadership and organizational core for the full unit. The unit will be composed of seven teams operating out of FDLE's regional operational centers throughout the state. Each team will be assigned to work with each center's [Regional Domestic Security Task Force](#). Each team member must:

- Have experience in intelligence, counterintelligence, or counterterrorism with a United States government agency, the United States armed forces, or a law enforcement agency; or
- Have at least three years of experience of actively working in the fields of intelligence, counterintelligence, or counterterrorism.

¹ The bill specifies that the term "adversary intelligence entity" includes any national, foreign, multinational, friendly, competitor, opponent, adversary, or recognized enemy government or nongovernmental organization, company, business, corporation, consortium, group, agency, cell, terrorist, insurgent, guerrilla entity, or person whose demonstrated actions, views, or opinions are a threat or are inimical to the interests of this state and the United States of America.

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Each team must consist of:

- A team leader, who is an assistant special agent in charge.
- A facility security officer, who is a special agent supervisor with counterintelligence experience.
- Four intelligence analysts, who are assigned to the facility security officer.
- A deputy team leader, who is a special agent supervisor.
- Six counterintelligence agents, who are assigned to the deputy team leader, one of whom must be a regional federal liaison officer, another who must be a regional state liaison officer, and one who must be a local liaison officer. (Section [1](#))

The bill requires FDLE to request the number of needed positions and requisite funding each fiscal year in order for each position in the unit to be fully staffed by December 30, 2033. (Section [1](#))

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

FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

STATE GOVERNMENT:

The bill will likely have a negative, indeterminate fiscal impact on the state. It requires the establishment of a new Counterintelligence and Counterterrorism Unit within FDLE, which will incur costs related to staffing, training, and equipping the initial unit and similar costs associated with creating the regional teams.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Florida Department of Law Enforcement

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) is a statewide law enforcement agency headed by the Governor and Cabinet.² The chief administrative officer of FDLE, statutorily known as the executive director but commonly referred to as the Commissioner of FDLE,³ is appointed by the Governor subject to a majority vote of the Governor and Cabinet, with the Governor on the prevailing side.⁴ The executive director must be a resident of Florida and must have served five years as a police executive or possess training and experience in police affairs or public administration.⁵

The mission of FDLE is to “promote public safety and strengthen domestic security by providing services in partnership with local, state, and federal criminal justice agencies to prevent, investigate, and solve crimes while protecting Florida’s citizens and visitors.”⁶ FDLE is subdivided into five divisions: Criminal Investigations and Forensic Science, Criminal Justice Information, Criminal Justice Professionalism, Capitol Police, and Executive Direction and Business Support.⁷ Additionally, the Florida Constitution required the creation of an Office of Domestic Security and Counterterrorism within FDLE.⁸

Office of Domestic Security

The executive director of FDLE, or his or her designee, serves as the Chief of Domestic Security (Chief).⁹ This role involves coordinating statewide efforts to assess, prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from acts of

² [Art. IV, s. 4\(g\), FLA. CONST.](#); see also s. [20.201, F.S.](#)

³ Florida Department of Law Enforcement, [Statement of Agency Organization and Operation](#) (last visited Jan. 30, 2026); see also Florida Department of Law Enforcement, [FDLE Headquarters](#) (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).

⁴ S. [20.201\(1\), F.S.](#)

⁵ S. [943.03\(1\), F.S.](#)

⁶ Florida Department of Law Enforcement, [Statement of Agency Organization and Operation](#) (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).

⁷ *Id.*; see also s. [20.201\(2\), F.S.](#)

⁸ [Art. IV, s. 4\(g\), FLA. CONST.](#)

⁹ S. [943.0311\(1\), F.S.](#)

terrorism and immigration enforcement incidents.¹⁰ The Chief is responsible for advising state leadership with recommendations based on ongoing assessments, coordinating proposals to reduce vulnerabilities, leveraging public and private resources, and utilizing regional task forces for support.¹¹ FDLE maintains seven Regional Operations Centers.¹²

The three primary components of Florida's domestic security governance structure include Regional Domestic Security Task Forces (RDSTFs), the Domestic Security Coordinating Group (DSCG), and the Domestic Security Oversight Council (DSOC).¹³

Regional Domestic Task Forces

RDSTFs consist of local and multi-disciplinary representatives who collectively support FDLE's domestic security mission and provide the necessary link between the state and local communities. Each RDSTF is co-chaired by a local sheriff or police chief and an FDLE special agent in charge.¹⁴ Members of RDSTFs include representatives from state and local law enforcement agencies, first responders, emergency management agencies, and hospitals.¹⁵ There are seven RDSTFs operating out of each of the regional operations centers.

RDSTFs advise FDLE and the Chief of Domestic Security on the development and implementation of a statewide strategy to address prevention, preparation, protection, response, and recovery efforts related to the state's domestic security.¹⁶ RDSTFs also coordinate counterterrorism efforts in cooperation with local, state, and federal agencies to ensure that such efforts are not fragmented and duplicative.¹⁷

Domestic Security Coordinating Group

The DSCG provides the structure for federal, state, and local responses to domestic security incidents. The DSCG is made up of representatives and subject matter experts from the RDSTFs, designated urban areas, other key organization liaisons and private sector representatives who come together to address domestic security issues.¹⁸

Domestic Security Oversight Council

The DSOC was established in 2004, with the Commissioner of FDLE as the chair and the Director of Florida Division of Emergency Management as the vice chair, to provide executive direction, leadership, and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature on counterterrorism and domestic security efforts.¹⁹ The council's membership is made up of voting and nonvoting members. Voting members include but are not limited to the Executive Director of the Division of Emergency Management, the Attorney General, and the Adjutant General of the Florida National Guard.²⁰ Nonvoting membership includes but is not limited to the Executive Director of the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, a representative of the United States Coast Guard, and a special agency in charge from an office of the Federal Bureau of Investigations within Florida.²¹

DSOC's duties include providing guidance to the RDSTFs and the DSCG with respect to statewide policies and operational protocols that support counterterrorism and domestic security efforts.²² DSOC must also review statewide or multiagency mobilizations and responses to major domestic security incidents and recommend

¹⁰ S. [943.0311\(1\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

¹¹ S. [943.0311\(1\)\(b\)-\(e\), F.S.](#)

¹² The Regional Operations Centers are located in: Fort Myers, Jacksonville, Miami, Orlando, Pensacola, Tallahassee, and Tampa Bay. FDLE, [FDLE Regions and Divisions](#) (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).

¹³ Florida Department of Law Enforcement, [Domestic Security Organization](#) (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).

¹⁴ S. [943.0312\(1\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

¹⁵ S. [943.0312\(1\)\(c\), F.S.](#)

¹⁶ S. [943.0312\(1\), F.S.](#)

¹⁷ S. [943.0312\(2\), F.S.](#)

¹⁸ Florida Department of Law Enforcement, [2024 Domestic Security Annual Report](#) (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).

¹⁹ S. [943.0313\(5\), F.S.](#)

²⁰ S. [943.0313\(1\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

²¹ S. [943.0313\(1\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

²² Florida Department of Law Enforcement, [2024 Domestic Security Annual Report](#) (last visited Jan. 30, 2026).

suggestions for training, improvement of response efforts, or improvement of coordination within the state.²³ DSOC also makes annual funding recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature that prioritize allocations necessary to implement domestic security strategy.²⁴

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Government Operations Subcommittee	15 Y, 0 N	1/29/2026	Toliver	Lines
Judiciary Committee			Kramer	Padgett
Budget Committee				
State Affairs Committee				

²³ [S. 943.0313\(5\)\(a\)9., F.S.](#)

²⁴ [S. 943.0313\(5\)\(b\), F.S.](#)