



Florida Police Chiefs Association

Quality Law Enforcement for the Sunshine State

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October 3, 2008

The Honorable Charlie Crist
The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Governor Crist:

The Florida Police Chiefs Association understands that current economic limitations have created a difficult time for all of Florida's public servants. As President of the FPCA and on behalf of the Association's members, I would like to thank you for your commitment to the citizens of our State and most importantly your pledge to keep our citizens safe in these distressing times. I would also like to express our belief that solutions to these challenging issues can be found that will not be detrimental to public safety.

Although we understand there are tough economic choices that must be made, we must express our strong concerns regarding the possibility of additional across the board budget cuts for the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. Police departments throughout the State rely heavily on FDLE for a wide variety of services. FDLE's crime labs and expert agents assist with hundreds of criminal investigations. FDLE's information services such as criminal histories, wanted/missing/stolen files and the sexual predator/offender registry facilitates the flow of critical current information on a daily basis and is the backbone of statewide law enforcement operations. Every law enforcement agency in Florida depends on FDLE to do the things that we as individual agencies cannot do alone, particularly for the smaller agencies which make up a large percentage of our membership.

The passage of Amendment One has already resulted in decreased staffing and resources and has increased the financial burden for agencies throughout the State. Additional across the board reductions to FDLE will shift more of the burden for public safety support to local governments and our communities simply cannot absorb these costs. Furthermore, and most importantly, we cannot allow these conditions to threaten the safety and security of our residents and visitors.

During previous times of economic stress, the notion of assessing a fee for FDLE's crime lab services surfaced. Several years ago, all law enforcement agencies statewide opposed such a proposal and our Association will continue to oppose a fee of this type. Assessing a fee for crime lab services would place an unfair and unmanageable financial strain on our law enforcement agencies and severely impact our ability to provide comprehensive police services in our communities.

As budget decisions are made, the FPCA looks to you to find options that pose the least negative impact on the ability of law enforcement to serve all those we have sworn to protect in the great State of Florida. We offer our assistance to you and encourage a partnership between State and local law enforcement in finding a workable solution.

Again, thank you for your efforts during this challenging time and be assured of our commitment to assist in these matters of mutual concern and interest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerald M. Monahan Jr.".

President, Florida Police Chiefs Association

GMM/am

cc: Senate President Ken Pruitt
House Speaker Marco Rubio
Senate President Designate Jeff Atwater
House Speaker Designate Ray Sansom
FDLE Commissioner Gerald Bailey
FPCA Executive Director Amy Mercer