

# Sheriff



# J. R. "Jack" Parker

BREVARD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

October 17, 2011

The Honorable Governor Rick Scott  
Office of Governor Rick Scott  
State of Florida  
The Capitol  
400 S. Monroe St.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor Scott:

Please allow me to express my most sincere gratitude for your continued interest and support to reverse the component in the 2011 pension law which arbitrarily raised the minimum age and length of service for law enforcement and corrections officers in the State of Florida.

Pursuant to our previous conversations, we have conducted, completed and attached our *Florida Mortality Study: Florida Law Enforcement and Corrections Officers compared to Florida General Population* for your review. Our study utilized data from the Florida Department of Health and the Division of Retirement that reflects the actual death rate of law enforcement and corrections officers belonging to the FRS versus the actual death rate in the general population for the most recent decade (2000 through 2009).

Our study found that law enforcement and corrections officers from Sheriff's Offices, State Police Agencies and the Department of Corrections who belonged to the Florida Retirement System died, on average, at the young age of 62, approximately twelve years earlier than the general population in Florida, at age 74. The general population in Florida lived an average of approximately 19% longer lives than the Florida law enforcement and corrections officers.

While there was great debate and thought put into many aspects of last year's pension legislation, the component increasing years of service and retirement ages for officers simply assumed officers were living longer and had life spans which were now more comparable to the general public. However, when we look at the real death rates in a real "apples to apples" comparison, those assumptions proved to be invalid. While members of the general public may be living longer, it is sadly not the case in the law enforcement and corrections profession.

We are hopeful this report will prove useful as the justification for legislation during the 2012 session to revert to the previous retirement standard of age 55 with 25 years of services. This study clearly demonstrates our officers do not enjoy a lengthy retirement when compared to the population they serve. Requiring officers to work to the age of 60 when they die at the average age of 62 is not acceptable.

Understanding the pension costs to the State, Counties (and Municipalities enrolled in the FRS) have been substantially reduced as a result of the many pension changes enacted, and realizing reversing this one aspect may have some financial impact, I would recommend this impact be offset by increasing the vesting period of special risk members from eight (8) to ten (10) years.

The Law Enforcement Officers and Corrections Officers in the State of Florida greatly appreciate your efforts to correct this situation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jack Parker", is written over a blue circular stamp or seal.

Sheriff Jack Parker  
Brevard County