



Volunteer Law Enforcement Officer Alliance, Inc.

Helping to keep volunteer officers and their communities safe, worldwide

August 12, 2020

Shirley Beauford
Assistant Director, Retirement
Florida Department of Management Services

Dear Assistant Director Beuford,

Recently the Volunteer Law Enforcement Officer Alliance (VLEOA) learned of requirements being imposed on Florida law enforcement officers entering retirement that affect the ability of agencies to serve their communities.

As you likely already know, Florida has been recognized as one of the leading states in the United States for progressive, community-focused, and professional volunteer policing. Several agencies in Florida have received national and international awards for their volunteer policing programs. In fact, Florida's progressive laws and policies concerning volunteer police are one of the reasons that our organization calls Florida home.

However, new regulations over the past several years in Florida have changed and essentially stopped the normal flow of fully-trained, certified, and experienced law enforcement officers from sheriff's offices and policing agencies within the Florida Retirement System from serving in reserve capacities with their agencies. Retiring sheriff's deputies have been told that they cannot volunteer in their communities as volunteer police officers, exposing their communities to reduced manpower in case of critical need and "brain drain" with loss of experience.

Also concerning, VLEOA has learned that currently serving volunteer reserve officers who hold civilian state retirement positions are being told that they can no longer continue to volunteer once they retire from the FRS. These are fire-fighters, teachers, university faculty, and state college faculty, who have spent years to earn law enforcement officer certification to serve in their volunteer roles as reserve police officers or sheriff's deputies.

On behalf of the VLEOA Board of Directors, this letter is to encourage the Florida Retirement System to re-examine the statutes of Florida (which do not mandate these restrictions that are currently being imposed) and provide exceptions for volunteer policing roles within the Florida Retirement System.

We stand ready to answer any questions you may have of our organization.

Sincerely,

Ross Wolf, Ed.D.
President
Volunteer Law Enforcement Officer Alliance, Inc.