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FEBRUARY/MARCH 2025

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## NEW SHERIFF IN TOWN!!!

Sheriff Rosie Cordero-Stutz made history on Tuesday, November 5, 2024, becoming the first Sheriff in Miami-Dade County in nearly 60 years. What makes it even more historic is that she is the first Hispanic female to be elected as Sheriff in the state of Florida.

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**VOLUME 43, NO. 1**

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**John Kazanjian**  
President  
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## "Injured Response Pharmacy takes care of our PBA members."

At the PBA, taking care of our members is our highest priority! As first responders, we are often more concerned with taking care of others than we are with ourselves. I, personally, had a health scare that required surgery, and luckily, I'm doing well. The best part is that it was fully covered by workers' comp with benefits provided under the Heart and Lung Bill. Navigating a workers' comp claim can be difficult, which is why I want to introduce you to Injured Response Pharmacy (IRP). They can help you navigate any workers comp claim such as a physical injury, Heart and Lung, PTSD, or Cancer, and deliver your meds directly to your home or office, and it's all free. I use their service and never have to worry about getting my meds on time. Also, everyone has direct access to Alberto Gil, the CEO of IRP and a long-time supporter of the PBA across the state. You'll never receive a bill from Injured Response Pharmacy. Don't use your health insurance for something that should be covered for you 100% for the rest of your life! If you have high blood pressure, heart disease, or an existing claim that you are receiving medications for, contact IRP today.



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## THE PRES SAYS



STEADMAN  
STAHL

As we begin this new year, I want to reflect on where we've been and where we're headed. Change is never easy, and as we transition from Miami-Dade Police to operating under the leadership of Sheriff Rosie Cordero-Stutz and her team, uncertainty is natural. However, this transition presents an opportunity for growth, stability, and a stronger future for all of us.

We are working closely with various municipalities, cities, and police departments from Key West to Aventura, securing significant successes, particularly with our contracts. These achievements demonstrate the strength of our organization and our commitment to ensuring fair and just working conditions for our members.

This shift brings adjustments—one of the most visible being our new title as Deputies instead of Police Officers. Additionally, contract negotiations, once requiring multiple approvals, now involve direct discussions with the Sheriff and her designees. The voters of Florida decided that the Sheriff should be accountable to the public, marking the first time in 60 years we have an elected Sheriff. This is a historic moment—one that entrusts the Sheriff with the responsibility of maintaining public safety, quality of life, and law and order across the entire county.

Public safety remains paramount. No matter how beautiful a community's parks, malls, or shopping centers may be, they mean little if residents do not feel safe. As we navigate this transition, we will face challenges, but also new opportunities. The Sheriff's Office will expand, with increased staffing and state-of-the-art equipment, bringing us in line with other counties. These enhancements will strengthen our ability to serve and protect.

The PBA will support Sheriff Cordero-Stutz as she navigates this new system of governance. Historically, Miami-Dade Police focused primarily on unincorporated areas, with limited presence in incorporated ones. Under the Sheriff's Office, we anticipate a more expansive and accountable presence, ensuring that resources are allocated where they are needed most. Unlike the Mayor-and-Commissioner-led government, which balanced many concerns, the Sheriff's focus will be singular: law enforcement and public safety.

Through dedication, resilience, and professionalism, we have overcome challenges before, and this transition will be no different. Law and order remain at the heart of what we do. Despite leadership and structural changes, our mission remains steadfast—we serve and protect our communities with integrity, courage, and dedication. Let's not allow fear of change to cloud our vision of what's possible. Instead, we must support one another, uphold the highest standards of professionalism, and build a future we can all be proud of.

This year will bring challenges, but also opportunities. We will continue working tirelessly to ensure that your voices are heard, your rights are protected, and your work is valued. Together, we are stronger, and together, we will move forward toward a common goal: the betterment of our communities. As President, my role—along with our great Board of Directors—is to maintain the best possible working conditions and benefits for our members. Over the past seven years,



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Brett Underhill

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## The President's Gallery



we have successfully fostered positive relationships with elected officials, always prioritizing public safety.

As we continue to move forward and work with the transition team, I am confident in the future. I understand that change can be intimidating, but I encourage everyone to take a deep breath, roll up our sleeves, and work together to advance our membership. Our focus remains on securing strong working conditions, competitive compensation, and robust benefits while maintaining positive relationships with officials from the Governor to City Council members.

Finally, I urge us all to look for the good in life. It's easy to be consumed by negativity, but life is fragile. The recent experience of our fellow officer, Joey, whose world changed in an instant, serves as a reminder of that fragility. Yet, in difficult moments, we also witness the power of unity—the law enforcement community and the public

coming together as one. Let's cherish our loved ones, find balance in our lives, and remain committed to our mission.

At PBA, we will continue working hard to secure and maintain the best benefits for our members. Thank you for your service, your commitment, and your trust. I look forward to all that we will accomplish together in the year ahead.

Stay safe and stay strong.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Steadman Stahl".

**Steadman Stahl**  
**South Florida PBA President**  
[steadman@sflpba.org](mailto:steadman@sflpba.org)

### A NEW ERA: THE TRANSITION TO THE MIAMI-DADE SHERIFF'S OFFICE



As we welcome the New Year, we also welcome the transition from the Miami-Dade Police Department to the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office. The beginning of this transition goes back to 2018, when a Florida constitutional amendment passed that required all

counties to elect certain officials, which now included a sheriff. Fast forward to November 2024, when Rosie Cordero-Stutz was elected as the new sheriff.

This shift involves some changes including rebranding. A new badge has been unveiled, and signs and forms must be changed to reflect the sheriff's office. Realignment of the Departmental Entities and Functions is another. The sheriff has restructured her command staff, and they have been provided with new titles. For example, the number two person in command, Deputy Director, Chris Carothers, was promoted and will now be known as the Undersheriff.

It takes careful planning and consideration of various things to transition smoothly. It will be important to establish clear guidelines for the roles and responsibilities of the sheriff's office. It will be important that not only those within the department understand these roles, but that residents understand these changes and how they may be affected. Community relations is important so that public trust and cooperation between the residents and the sheriff's office is positive and effective. Additionally, the budget allocation, which is almost one billion dollars, is now up to the sheriff. This addresses things such as payroll and transitional costs.

While a big change like this can be scary, it can also be a very good thing. This is an opportunity to get a fresh perspective and new ideas. This elected position may serve as an opportunity to root out complacency and provide an opportunity for reform and transparency.

It is definitely an understatement to say that this transition is a big deal, because it is huge in every way. Sheriff Cordero-Stutz is going to have to make some difficult decisions, which may not be the most popular, but it will be important to look ahead at the big picture



***Retired Director Fred Taylor with  
sheriff Cordero-Stutz***

and remember that change, while it can be unsettling, is an important part of a healthy political system. Changes in government provide opportunities to address shortcomings, embrace new ideas, and adapt to new and changing circumstances. When managed peacefully and democratically, such transitions can strengthen institutions, encourage positive community engagement and pave the way for a brighter future.

So, as we look to move forward in the New Year, I would like to officially congratulate Sheriff Rosie Cordero-Stutz, and wish her the best. To all of our members, I wish you health, happiness and good fortune as you continue to provide the best public service in the country. And as always, remember to stay safe out there!

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me at 305-593-0044 or [dg@sflpba.org](mailto:dg@sflpba.org).



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# FROM A LIFELONG CALLING TO A MEANS TO AN END



Law enforcement has traditionally been seen as more than just a job. It has often been regarded as a calling—a noble profession that demands dedication, sacrifice, and an unwavering commitment to public service. For decades, officers who

joined the force saw themselves as “company men,” deeply loyal to the institution and devoted to lifelong careers in service. However, in recent years, this perception has shifted. The profession is increasingly viewed as a means to an end—a stepping stone to other opportunities or simply a way to earn a paycheck. Understanding this transformation requires a look at cultural, economic, and systemic factors that have reshaped the identity of law enforcement careers.

One of the key drivers of this shift is the changing perception of work and loyalty in modern society. In past generations, people often stayed with one employer for the entirety of their careers, valuing stability, loyalty, and long-term benefits. This mindset extended to law enforcement, where officers took pride in their tenure, often serving 20 to 30 years before retiring with pensions. However, the rise of a more transient workforce—driven by economic instability, shifting job markets, and evolving cultural norms—has challenged this traditional perspective. Today’s younger generations tend to prioritize personal growth, work-life balance, and diverse career experiences over long-term loyalty to a single employer.

The nature of the law enforcement profession itself has also played a role in this evolution. Policing is a demanding and often stressful job. Officers face high levels of danger, public scrutiny, and emotional strain on

a daily basis. Over time, the toll of these pressures has led to increased burnout rates and a growing reluctance to view law enforcement as a lifelong career. Many individuals enter the field with the intention of gaining skills, experience, or benefits, but ultimately move on to less taxing professions or private-sector opportunities.

Economic considerations have further contributed to the transformation of law enforcement into a “means to an end” job. Historically, the promise of pensions, job security, and other benefits made policing an attractive career choice. However, budget cuts, reduced benefits, and uncertain economic conditions have eroded some of these incentives. In many jurisdictions, police departments struggle to offer competitive salaries or maintain robust retirement packages. As a result, the profession no longer guarantees the same level of financial stability that it once did, making it less appealing as a long-term commitment.

Public perception and societal pressures have also significantly impacted how individuals view careers in law enforcement. In recent years, increased scrutiny and criticism of policing practices have placed officers under a microscope. High-profile incidents and national debates about police accountability have fostered a challenging environment for officers, who may feel undervalued or unfairly judged. For some, the strain of navigating these dynamics discourages long-term dedication to the field.

Additionally, the rise of alternative career pathways and educational opportunities has influenced the way individuals approach law enforcement careers. Many officers now view the profession as a stepping stone to other roles, such as private security, federal law enforcement, or leadership positions in public administration. Enhanced access to higher education and specialized training allows officers to diversify their skill sets and explore new avenues beyond traditional policing.

Despite these trends, some administrators and senior officers remain “company men,” holding steadfast to the traditional ideals of lifelong commitment and loyalty to the profession. These individuals often view law enforcement as a calling rather than just a job. For them, the mission of serving and protecting the community



## THE DISH FROM ISH

is deeply ingrained, and they see their roles as more than personal careers—they see them as part of a larger purpose.

These administrators often stay in the profession for decades, motivated by a sense of duty, pride, and a desire to mentor the next generation of officers. They work to uphold the values of integrity, discipline, and service, serving as role models and leaders within their departments. For many, their commitment stems from a belief that law enforcement is a cornerstone of societal stability and justice. They feel a personal responsibility to ensure the institution's legacy and to guide their departments through times of change and challenge.

Moreover, these “company men” often invest in creating a positive workplace culture and advocating for their officers. They focus on improving working conditions, addressing mental health concerns, and fostering professional growth within their ranks. By doing so, they not only reinforce their own commitment but also inspire a renewed sense of loyalty and pride among their teams.

As your union representatives, we believe it is crucial to address these challenges and advocate for restoring law enforcement as a lifelong vocation. We must work together to push for competitive pay, robust benefits, and better working conditions to ensure our profession remains a viable and fulfilling career choice. Supporting mental health initiatives and fostering professional development opportunities are also critical to keeping talented officers engaged and committed to serving our communities.

Our role as a union is to amplify your voices and protect the integrity of this profession. By standing united, we can navigate these changing times and ensure that law enforcement remains a respected and rewarding career path. Let us continue to fight for the values that define us—dedication, service, and loyalty to our communities and to each other.

Please feel free to contact me at [ish@sflpba.org](mailto:ish@sflpba.org) or at (305) 593-0044.



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# “NEW YEAR, RENEWED DUTY: CULTIVATING POSITIVITY AND RESILIENCE IN LAW ENFORCEMENT”



The start of a new year presents an opportunity for renewal, growth, and goal setting. For law enforcement professionals, who face unique challenges and stressors daily, beginning the year with a positive outlook is essential—not only for

individual well-being but also for the strength and effectiveness of their teams. This mindset fosters resilience, boosts morale, and strengthens relationships with the communities they serve.

### *Why Positivity Matters in Law Enforcement*

Law enforcement is an inherently stressful profession. Officers regularly encounter high-pressure situations, trauma, and unpredictable work environments. Over time, these experiences can lead to physical, mental, and emotional fatigue. Adopting a positive outlook at the start of the year, however, can serve as a protective buffer against these challenges.

A positive mindset builds emotional resilience, which is vital for managing stress. It enables officers to remain calm under pressure, think clearly, and make sound decisions in critical moments. Furthermore, positivity promotes stronger teamwork. Trust and collaboration are the cornerstones of law enforcement, and a positive work environment enhances these bonds.

Positivity also influences public interactions. Community trust and cooperation are critical for effective policing. Officers with a positive demeanor are more approachable and better equipped to de-escalate tense situations, thereby reinforcing bonds with the communities they serve.

### *Strategies for Starting the Year Positively*

#### **Reflect on Achievements**

Begin the year by acknowledging past successes. Whether it's solving a case, launching a community program, or achieving personal growth, recognizing these milestones boosts morale and instills a sense of accomplishment.

#### **Set Realistic Goals**

Goal-setting provides direction and motivation. Encourage officers to set both professional and personal goals, such as mastering new skills, improving physical fitness, or increasing community outreach. Realistic goals promote a sense of purpose and progress.

#### **Focus on Health and Wellness**

Physical and mental well-being are fundamental to maintaining positivity. Departments should prioritize wellness by offering counseling services, fitness programs, and stress management workshops. Officers who focus on self-care are better equipped to manage the demands of their roles.

#### **Foster a Supportive Environment**

Leadership plays a pivotal role in fostering positivity. By promoting open communication, mutual respect, and recognizing effort, leaders can inspire their teams. Regular check-ins and team-building activities cultivate camaraderie and trust.

#### **Embrace Community Engagement**

Strengthening community relationships is a powerful way to start the year on a positive note. Organizing or participating in community events fosters goodwill and reminds officers of their critical role in improving lives. These interactions often rekindle motivation and a sense of purpose.

#### **Practice Gratitude**

Gratitude shifts focus from challenges to blessings. Encourage officers to reflect regularly on what they're thankful for, both at work and in their personal lives. Sharing these reflections as a team can deepen connections and improve workplace culture.

#### **Overcoming Challenges to Positivity**

Adopting a positive outlook is beneficial but not



always easy. Law enforcement professionals face persistent stressors, including long hours, traumatic incidents, and public scrutiny. To counter these challenges, departments must actively support their teams. Leadership should prioritize mental health resources, encourage open discussions about difficulties, and celebrate even small victories.

Additionally, training in mindfulness and stress management techniques can help officers navigate tough times. It's crucial to emphasize that positivity does not mean ignoring challenges but rather approaching them with hope, adaptability, and determination.

### The Ripple Effect of Positivity

When law enforcement professionals adopt a positive mindset, the benefits extend far beyond the individual. Teams become more cohesive, productive, and supportive. This positivity radiates outward, strengthening public trust and enhancing community interactions.

Communities rely on officers for protection,

leadership, and stability. Officers who embody positivity and resilience inspire confidence and foster cooperation among the public. Thus, starting the year on a positive note uplifts not only law enforcement personnel but also the communities they serve.

### Conclusion

The new year is a time to reset and refocus. For law enforcement professionals, embracing positivity is not just a personal choice but a professional imperative. By reflecting on achievements, setting meaningful goals, fostering supportive environments, and prioritizing health and wellness, officers can enhance their well-being and build stronger connections with their teams and communities. In a profession defined by challenges, positivity is a powerful tool for resilience, success, and meaningful impact in the year ahead. Please feel free to contact me at [ramos@sflpba.org](mailto:ramos@sflpba.org) or at (305) 593-0044.



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# NEW BEGINNINGS, TIMELESS PROMISE



I became president of the RPOC (Retired Police Officers Council) three years ago, taking over for Dennis Bambach. At first, I thought that this would be a difficult task but as time went on, I adapted to the role. Dennis was and is well known and if you

had ever had a county vehicle accident (crash) you met Dennis Bambach. Dennis and I have known each other since I started in 1969. We rode motors in the North District and endured the conventions in 1972, the riots of the eighties, as well as several motorcycle crashes where one of us went down while riding with the other.

I felt it necessary that I pay tribute to Dennis and what he has done for the department and for me as a friend and colleague for over fifty-seven years. I've met and worked with many of you during my career and going forward I can say the experiences we shared have made the Miami-Dade Police Department, now the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office all it can be going forward.

I say all this because people like Dennis and I, along with countless others have paved the way for the new breed of men and women serving the people of Miami-Dade County. The officers that came before us in the fifties and sixties were remarkable people who served during times when salaries were barely enough to live on. I started at \$712.00 dollars a month and took home less than \$200.00 a pay day.

I recently received an email from Richard Plager, a retiree who was hired in 1954. Richard is now 97 years old and lives in Naples, FL. He started at a time when Dade County was under the Sheriff named Tom Kelly. Richard was Chief of Detectives and was re-assigned to Captain in 1966. He then served under E. Wilson Purdy until his retirement in 1988. Richard is a wealth of information and stories of how things were under an elected Sheriff in the fifties.

I want to pursue how it was then and speak to older retirees who are willing to share how it really was back

in the day. I always felt that common sense was the best way to handle most situations during my career. I also felt that sometimes you had to do what you had to do to survive. I would say things have changed in the twenty-first century. I would like to promote the legacy of the men and women that served and the legacy of the Dade County Sheriff's Office, thru Dade County PSD, Metro Dade PD, Miami-Dade PD and now the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office in 2025. What a story that would be! On one final note I attended the viewing and service for retired member Al Briguera. Al was a friend and member who was always a loyal member of the RPOC. May he be remembered as a person who gave and commanded the respect of those who had known him. Rest in Peace my friend.

Vice President Jerry Rudoff: Over the last couple of months, we have made some modifications, updates, and corrections to our website and would encourage everyone to take a minute to check things out. From the website, you can join the RPOC, renew your membership, sign up to receive our eNews and other pertinent information and update your personal contact information. You can also register for our reunions. As an RPOC member or member spouse, if you have a side business, you can post your business card for free. If you wish to highlight members, post old pictures, let us know and they will go right up on our Facebook group. A one stop shop you might say. Also, we try to post on our PRIVATE Facebook group as often as new information about our membership or any law enforcement agency in Miami-Dade comes to our attention and now that includes the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office (MDSO). Goodbye MDPD ole friend. It was nice knowing you. That is also where we post event pictures both past and present. When you visit YOUR website, please feel free to try out the various nuances so that we then have many sets of eyes ensuring the information is correct and stays relevant. See y'all online!

Chaplain Reba Miller: Dear Members, Friends, Families and Associates, wishing each and every one a wonderful and blessed New Year. We all make plans and resolutions. We dream of new beginnings and successful accomplishments. For all our wants and dreams and successes, nothing can compare to what Our Heavenly Father promises. In Jeremiah 29:11, it says, \* For I know



the plans I have for you," declares the Lord," plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future". We can't predict the future, but we can be prepared. Ask for God's direction, guidance, and peace. Ask for your heart, your mind, and your direction to be open to His guidance in the upcoming year.

Special thanks to everyone who helped with the January 7th working/ board meeting, that was responsible for getting out all the membership information, dues and reunion facts and forms. Apologies are in order to those members who are missing a return envelope. If so, you can return all your necessary paperwork in a regular, self-stamped envelope, addressed as follows: Retired Police Officers Council, P.O. Box 570790, Miami, FL. 33257-0790. Also, some members mailouts are missing the notice for the St. John's Ridership Cruise, scheduled for Saturday, May 3, 2025, total cost \$72.80 Per Person. This includes all costs/taxes, port charges, complete meals, appetizers, and tips. Please RSVP to Reba Miller, at (954)436-3627 or (954)448-0939 (cell). Seating is

limited and all payments and arrangements need to be completed by April 10, 2025.

It is with great sadness that we advise the passing of the following LEO members. We extend special condolences to their family and friends.

1. Bert Horvath 11/2024
2. Al Briguera 01/2025
3. Sally Watson 01/2025

Lord, direct our steps and lead us on the paths you have purposed and planned for us. Help us to look for your guidance in all we do, to bring honor and glory to You. Amen. Blessings to all!

### Now Accepting Applications for PBA Scholarships!

**The South Florida PBA Scholarship Committee accepts applications for scholarship funds between January 1st and April 15th of each year. Applications must be postmarked by April 15th for acceptance. No exceptions! Scholarships are based on financial need as well as merit. All information provided will be kept confidential. Scholarships are awarded once a year.**

#### Eligibility Requirements

(all criteria must be met to be considered):

1. Applicant must be a child of a South Florida PBA member with a minimum of one-year membership or have prior Board approval. Children of retirees are not eligible to apply.
2. Applicant must be, or plan to be, a part-time or full-time student at an accredited two-year or four-year college. Graduate students are not eligible to apply.
3. Applicant must include an essay, of no more than 750 words reflecting on a time when someone helped them or made a significant impact on their life, and how they plan to 'pay it forward' in their community or field of study. The essay must be typed, double-spaced, using 12-point Arial or Times New Roman font only.
4. Send application, essay, Letter of Acceptance (first-time applicants only) and an official transcript with GPA in one package to: South Florida PBA Scholarship Committee, 10680 PBA Memorial Blvd. (NW 25th Street), Doral, FL 33172.

DO NOT submit any photos, resumes, letters of recommendation. DO NOT bind in any way.

To download the application, visit [www.dcpba.org/scholarship-award](http://www.dcpba.org/scholarship-award) or, if additional information is needed, contact Kim Gregson at: (305) 593-0044 or e-mail: [kim@sflpba.org](mailto:kim@sflpba.org).



## BRINGING SMILES AND SUPPORT: POAT'S IMPACTFUL EVENTS



The POAT would like to thank everyone who participated in "Heroes and Helpers" event. This special event was held on December 2, 2024, benefiting the Police Officer Assistance Trust's Gifts for Surviving Children Program. This year's event, generously

sponsored by our partners at Target in Coral Gables, supported 11 families and 21 children from 7 different agencies. Commander Rudy Gonzalez Jr. of Coral Gables Police Department and Secretary for the POAT is the one who puts this amazing evening together as well as the "Cops Ride for Kids." Many others also came out that evening and played a significant role in the success of this event. Even more importantly, they ensured that the families felt remembered and brought joy to them

during this special time of year. The smiles, laughter, and conversations were truly infectious, and we know that the memories created will be cherished by all involved. **THANK YOU!!!**

The "Cops Ride for Kids Motorcycle Ride to benefit POAT's Holiday Gifts for Surviving Children" held on December 7, 2024, consisted of 551 motorcyclists enjoying a beautiful day with a ride to the Keys. We would like to thank everyone who participated in the ride and the coordinators who put this together.

The Eleventh Annual "Homerun for Heroes" Kickball Tournament was held at Kendall Indian Hammocks Park on February 7-8, 2025.

The 44th Annual Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Ceremony will be held at Tropical Park on Thursday, May 1st, 2025. Sunset service at 6:30pm. The park is located at 7900 SW 40th Street.

Thanks for your support and stay safe.



**THE ALVAREZ LAW FIRM**

**Alex Alvarez**

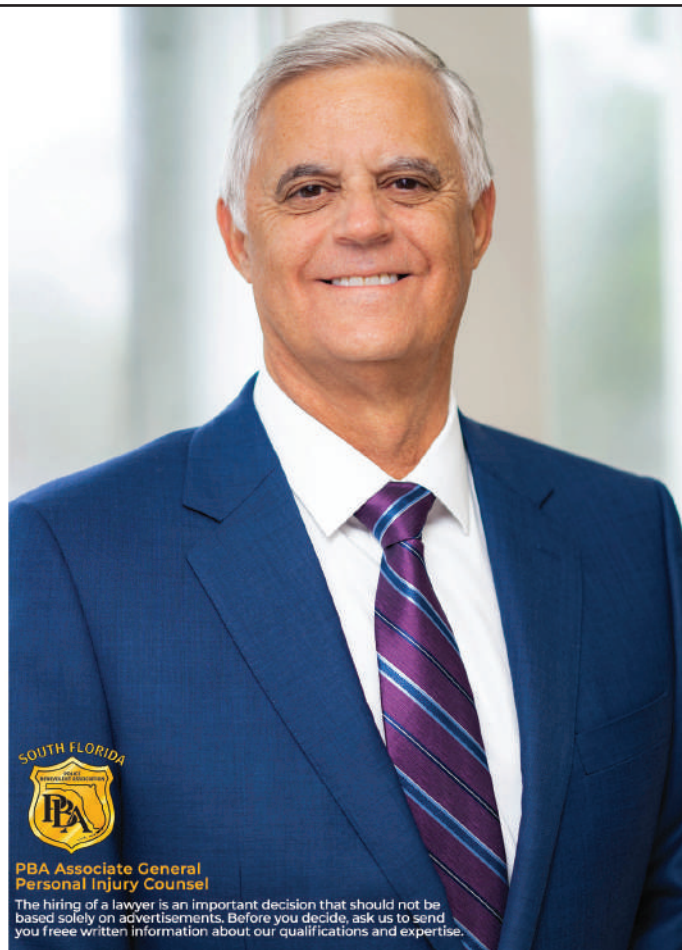
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JOB OPENINGS

THE HALO LAW FOR  
FIRST RESPONDERS



First and foremost, I hope all of you had a safe and joyous holiday. Happy New Year to all. A new law became effective January 1, 2025, for first responders that will protect us in the coming year and hopefully, for years to come. It is called the “Halo Law”

for first responders. It is a criminal statute that makes it a second degree misdemeanor to harass a first responder who is engaged in the lawful performance of their duties.

The statutory language is as follows:

**F.S. 843.31(2)(a) – “It is unlawful for a person, after receiving a verbal warning not to approach from a person he or she knows or reasonably should know is a first responder, who is engaged in the lawful performance of a legal duty, to knowingly and willfully violate such warning and approach or remain within 25 feet of the first responder with the intent to:**

- 1.** Impede or interfere with the first responder’s ability to perform such duty;
- 2.** Threaten the first responder with physical harm; or
- 3.** Harass the first responder.”

While this is one more stride toward protecting those wearing the badge, there are a number of elements that must exist in order to establish probable cause for an arrest under the new law. In this section, “Harass” means “to willfully engage in a course of conduct directed at a first responder which intentionally causes substantial emotional distress in that first responder and serves no legitimate purpose.” No doubt the meaning of this language will be tested in the courts in the coming month and years.

**First,** it is essential that you are in the lawful performance of your duties as a first responder at the time of the offense. You must be actively engaged in performing your duties at the time of the offense. Simply being in uniform or being a first responder is not enough.

**Second,** the offender must be warned by the first responder not to approach or to remain twenty-five (25) feet away from them. For those who are not good at estimating distance, perhaps you articulate this element

in an arrest form using sign posts or other objects on the crime scene.

**Third,** the offender must know or “reasonably should have known” the warning was given by a “first responder.” For the purposes of this law, “first responder” includes law enforcement officers, correctional probation officers, fire fighters, and emergency medical providers. One would hope that documenting you were in uniform and/or that you advised the offender of your status would suffice. Again, the law will be tested.

Finally, the law requires that the offender refused to comply with the warning and either remain within 25 feet or approached you with the intent to: impede or interfere with the performance of your duties; threaten you with physical harm; or harass you in some way. This is a critical element and will require the clear articulation of any type of threat or harassment.

Remember, if the offender is in your space or refuses to move away, harassment and threats can be either verbal, physical, or both. You do not have to prove the elements of assault or battery to make an arrest. This is about the offender impeding your ability to do your job. After being warned, the offender need only approach or remain within 25 feet. It is, however, up to you to articulate the harassment or threats made by the offender, as judges will be scrutinizing these charges at bond hearings.

This is just one more tool to protect you while you are out there protecting us. As always, we are here to educate you, so you can assist us in the cause. Be careful out there and stay safe! Always! Your faithful advocate....

2025 PENDING GRIEVANCES

This list represents the pending grievances filed at the various departments represented by the South Florida Police Benevolent Association as of December 31, 2024. The PBA legal staff receives numerous other complaints that are resolved by other means.

DEPARTMENT/DISTRICT:	
CITY OF MIAMI PD.....	4
MIAMI-DADE CORRECTIONS Association.....	1
Total.....	1
MIAMI-DADE SHERIFF'S Northside.....	1
Total	1
MIAMI GARDENS PD.....	4
MONROE COUNTY SHERIFF'S (Detention).....	1
TOTAL GRIEVANCES.....	11



# Congrats to Retired Members

The South Florida PBA is proud to honor retired members who have put in long hours and outstanding service for their departments and communities. Join us in honoring these great members and exceptional public servants as they celebrate their retirement.



**Arnold Palmer**  
Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office



**Carmen Castro**  
Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office



**Christian Smith**  
Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office



**James Watkins**  
Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office



**Jeff Schmidinger & Jose Santiago**  
Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office



**Kim Nanney**  
Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office



**Luis Trigour**  
Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office



**Michael Smith**  
Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office



**Raymond Rosario**  
Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office

# *THERE'S A* **NEW SHERIFF** *IN TOWN!!!*

*By David Greenwell*  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Sheriff Rosie Cordero-Stutz made history on Tuesday, November 5, 2024, becoming the first Sheriff in Miami-Dade County in nearly 60 years. What makes it even more historic is that she is the first Hispanic female to be elected as Sheriff in the state of Florida. She was sworn in on January 7, 2025, and now leads the newly formed Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office (MDSO).







Her time in the Northside District prepared her to climb the ranks, serving in varied and demanding roles like the Crime Suppression Team, the Robbery Intervention Detail, the Homicide Bureau, the Internal Affairs Bureau, the Media Relations Bureau and as the Major of the Robbery Bureau.

She went on to become North Operations Division Chief, helping to lead the Department through a series of challenges, including the COVID-19 Pandemic, civil unrest, and the tragic Surfside Building collapse. She was then promoted to Assistant Director where her list of responsibilities grew, but it was a job that she had prepared for her entire life. She credits her parents, particularly her mother, for instilling in her a strong work ethic, and an attitude that she should not let others define her limitations but strive to do the best at whatever she set out to achieve. At a recent retirement party, the sheriff was proud to praise a senior female robbery detective for never thinking of herself as a female cop, but as a cop first. Sheriff Cordero-Stutz truly believes the same and throughout her career has proven anything a male cop could do she could do as well or better, including being elected to one of Florida's most powerful elected positions.

Sheriff Cordero-Stutz understands the hardships working as a cop as follows: Going back to her first assignment at Northside, she says, "I fell in love with patrol. There were moments when you arrive to a location and you're able to help people in their darkest moments, diffusing situations." She said her ability to connect to people and to resolve disputes and work through difficult situations stems from the lessons she learned from her mother.

At the Northside District, she was involved in numerous chases of suspects, in cars and on foot, often having to jump over fences and other obstacles to subdue individuals who refused to give up. As a member of the Priority Response Unit in the Northside District, she and a partner were assigned to find a subject wanted for murder. They

found him walking on a street. The suspect resisted arrest. "It was a heck of a fight," she said. Her experience better equips her to ensure the men and women of the MDSO have the resources and safety equipment to get the job done with the utmost officer safety measures.

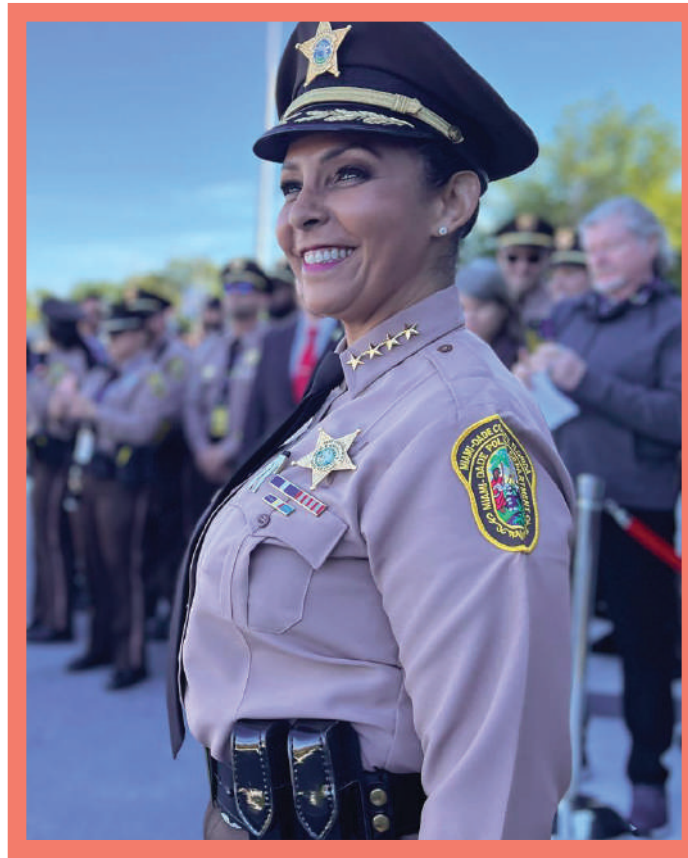
Later assigned to the Homicide Bureau, she "lived, breathed, and slept homicide cases." At the time she was single and did not have any children, so she poured herself into her job. "It was obviously important work, giving closure to the families of victims and helping those who no longer had a voice." She spent five years in the Bureau.

She wishes to maintain and improve our relations with every community and says, "Experience matters, it truly matters, because every one of our officers, or deputies,

can take a person's civil rights away in our duty to protect the public, and in that role, sometimes very bad things can happen." She further states, "We've been blessed here; turn on the news and pay attention to some other departments. We don't have those issues here because of our relationship with the community and the fact that we continually learn from our experiences. We have a rich history of having done things well."

Sheriff Cordero-Stutz is dedicated to investing in our law enforcement officers. She prioritizes comprehensive training programs and continuous education, ensuring our

officers are equipped with the latest techniques and best practices, providing Miami-Dade residents with the highest standards of law enforcement. She has pledged to focus on combating public corruption and maintaining vigilance against potential terrorist threats, reflecting her deep commitment to the safety and integrity of the community, while continuing to always have the backs of her deputies. Miami-Dade County looks forward to a new era of leadership under Sheriff Cordero-Stutz, confident in her ability to uphold justice and enhance public safety for all residents.





# The Road to Recovery

## Motorcycle Deputy Joey Vallejos' Fight After a Life-Changing Accident

By Lyan Babilonia



Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office motorcycle deputy Joseph Vallejos, known as 'Joey,' started 2025 with many plans and goals to pursue. First, he wanted to continue serving the community through his job and, of course, spend time with his wife and kids after a busy holiday season. But a serious traffic accident while on duty on January 8, 2025, put everything on hold.

It was a typical sunny day with nice weather in South Florida, and his shift was going smoothly without major incidents until he was driving on the 13800 block of Southwest 152nd Street. A young woman in her 20s crashed into him, and his life changed in an instant.

"I started very slowly heading westbound. My light turned green, so I drove a short distance to the next traffic light, which had just turned green as well, and I was in the number one lane. I could see that there was nobody in the left turn lane, so I decided to make a left turn into

the shopping center. My concern shifted, and I was more focused on cars coming out of the plaza, a large intersection. As I approached the intersection, I didn't see anyone, but my peripheral vision made me feel like I saw the silver car right in front of my bike, like, right there. That's when I realized I didn't have enough time to brake or do anything, causing the crash," Vallejos remembered.

The eight-year veteran also explained that after he landed on the ground, he couldn't feel his pelvis or left leg.

"I could see blood on my left hand. I was yelling that I was in pain, 'Please, somebody get help or hand me my radio'," he screamed. A civilian called 911, and help arrived promptly. He was immediately transported to Jackson South Medical Center.

Once Joey arrived at the hospital, the doctor told him that he had no choice but to intubate him to save his life. The officer was sedated with anesthesia to undergo pelvic

surgery, and he is now recovering at the Encompass Rehab Center in Cutler Bay.

### **The Brotherhood of Motorcycle Deputies**

From the very first moment, he realized the strong relationship he had built with the other 18 motorcycle deputies, led by Sergeant Gio Poveda, and PBA members.

They went to the hospital to support his wife and family, and ‘that’s priceless,’ according to Vallejos.

The 35-year-old officer was in critical condition with multiple fractures but never lost consciousness. He will never forget the emotional support of his coworkers, who stood by him and his wife during this difficult time.

“I’m truly grateful. It’s unbelievable. They always make time to visit me,” said Vallejos.

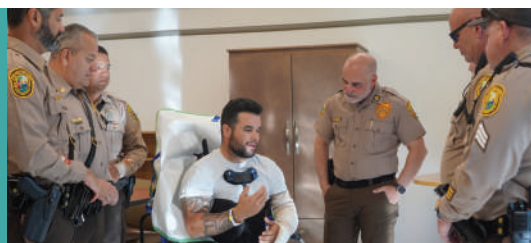
The connection with everyone was evident at the Encompass facility, where his coworkers came to cheer him up during the interview. They trust each other, have open

Montero affirmed.

This fact, along with the support from family and friends, is crucial for Joey at this moment. This brotherhood becomes most evident during life’s toughest times.

Poveda said, “This is not an easy situation to manage, but we responded right away when we heard about the accident. All of the guys were there instantly, basically. We provided a safe passage for them to go from the accident scene to the hospital, and we’re thankful for all the units that joined us to help take Joey in. We’ve been there from day one until now, supporting him and his family through the PBA, HPOA, and POAT.”

During the first few hours after the accident, everything was happening “behind the scenes” because Vallejos was receiving medical treatment. Now, however, everyone has the opportunity to stop by and speak with him. Although, for the moment, Vallejos has “banned” jokes, as laughing



conversations about what happened, and discuss how the recovery process is progressing.

Definitely, this isn’t a brotherhood that was built overnight. It’s a relationship that takes time and dedication because you spend so much time with your coworkers, and they become a second family.

His superiors Sergeant Gio Poveda and Lieutenant Jorge Montero were also there.

Montero agreed on how this brotherhood is growing year over year.

“We do a lot of things together, and we always try to be there for each other. One thing he didn’t mention is that he’s very young and active. Before he came to the motor unit, he worked as a police diver. So, you can imagine a police diver in the water, swimming constantly with the tanks and all the strain. He was an instructor, so he was very active,” said the lieutenant.

Montero also told Heat magazine that Joey is part of the football league. “Joey also just started doing pushups after the D games, so whenever the Dolphins would score a touchdown, he would go with one of the Dolphins players into the end zone and do push-ups there. That’s why he’s strong and physical. He’s going to rehab pretty quickly,”

causes him a lot of pain.

“I have a permanent titanium plate with two rods holding everything together,” he explained. He also has an injury to a vertebra, which means his case remains serious.

### **What Comes Next for Joey**

Joey will also need surgery on his knee. The officer understands that they are waiting for him to recover from the pelvic surgery before scheduling the next procedure.

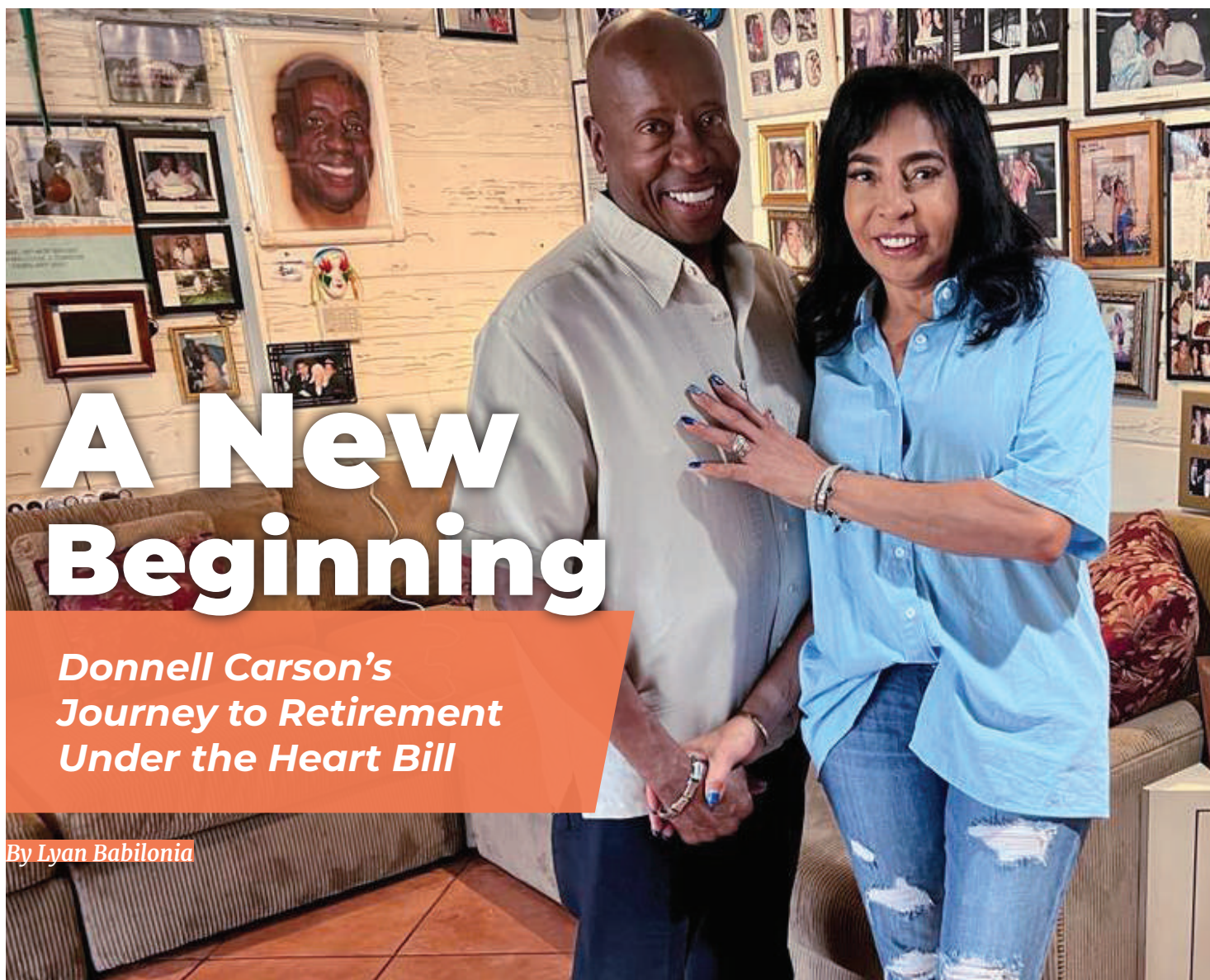
After that, many therapies and doctor visits will continue. Despite the sensitivity of the situation, everyone remains hopeful that this difficult experience will soon pass.

So far, there have been small advancements. Vallejos is able to sit in a wheelchair and on the bed with professional assistance, and he will continue taking small steps until he can fully recover. The doctors gave him a good prognosis from the first day.

He is confident that he will return to his duties as a motorcycle deputy.

Most importantly, he looks forward to returning to his wife and children, ages 11 and 4, who had planned a Disney cruise vacation for April. Although Vallejos knows that this dream may now take a little longer, the celebration will be even more special for having had a second chance at life.





# A New Beginning

*Donnell Carson's Journey to Retirement Under the Heart Bill*

*By Lyan Babilonia*

New year, new beginnings. This sentiment perfectly applies to retired Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office Deputy Donnell Carson. He served in District 6 and recently retired under the Heart/Lung Bill after 24 years of dedicated service.

Making his health a priority was not an easy decision, as he had always been used to caring for others and giving his best at work. Thanks to the support of the Police Benevolent Association (PBA), he was able to understand his rights and secure two lawyers who helped him every step of the way until he obtained his disability retirement.

Alberto Gil, from the Injured Response Pharmacy, was also there to support him during the process.

"At Injured Response Pharmacy, we pride ourselves on being a resource of information for first responders seeking answers regarding Heart and Lung claims,

as well as other workers' comp claims. Whether it's answering simple questions about meeting the criteria for a claim, navigating the process, or addressing questions regarding medications, IRP is here to help!", said Gil.

He also explained that IRP provides concierge service, including automatic delivery of medications, direct communication with doctors' offices, and works closely with attorneys to ensure that the process is quick and seamless.

"You'll receive your delivery at home or office, and you'll never get a bill from IRP for anything," he added.

## **A Tough Decision: Prioritizing Health Over Service**

When Carson realized he could no longer commit to his job 100 percent as he had in the past, and after experiencing a series of health issues—including a hospitalization and an accident while driving his patrol

car, which was then taken away from him—he decided to pursue retirement. Initially, he was transferred to desk duty at the district station, but working fewer hours was only a temporary fix, not a permanent solution.

He underwent constant treatment and had five eye surgeries. All of this affected his ability to work.

### **The PBA's Support:**

#### **Guiding Carson Through the Journey**

“The PBA has always taken care of me from day one. They have great people in the union. They’re really good people. A lot of police officers don’t understand the importance of having someone to represent you because you just don’t know,” said Carson.

The retired Deputy also explained that many PBA members have gone through different situations, and he benefits from sharing with them because they guide him when he needs it most.

The first person who directed him to seek help was Nizam ‘Ish’ Ishmael, vice president of the South Florida PBA. Ishmael immediately referred his case to an attorney, and from that very first moment, Carson felt protected by the union.

That’s why his advice to other law enforcement officers is to take care of themselves. Sometimes, out of ignorance or because of a high tolerance for pain, situations that could be serious are overlooked.

“When you don’t feel good, especially if you have an injury that occurs at work, you have to notify your supervisor and they need to do a first report of injury because you don’t know when that thing is going to come about”, said Carson.

Before receiving approval for retirement, Carson benefited from Maximum Medical Improvement (MMI), a workers’ compensation fund that assisted him before he began receiving his retirement benefits. This was made possible through the hard work of PBA attorneys and the diligence of the medical staff.

Carson is very grateful to have had his attorney by his side throughout the nightmare that started just before his son’s birthday.

His story began in October 2022. He was supposed to go on a cruise with his family for the birthday celebration, but he had to cancel. Everything started because Carson was seeing blurry, and his son recommended that he go

for an eye exam and get a new pair of glasses since they were broken.

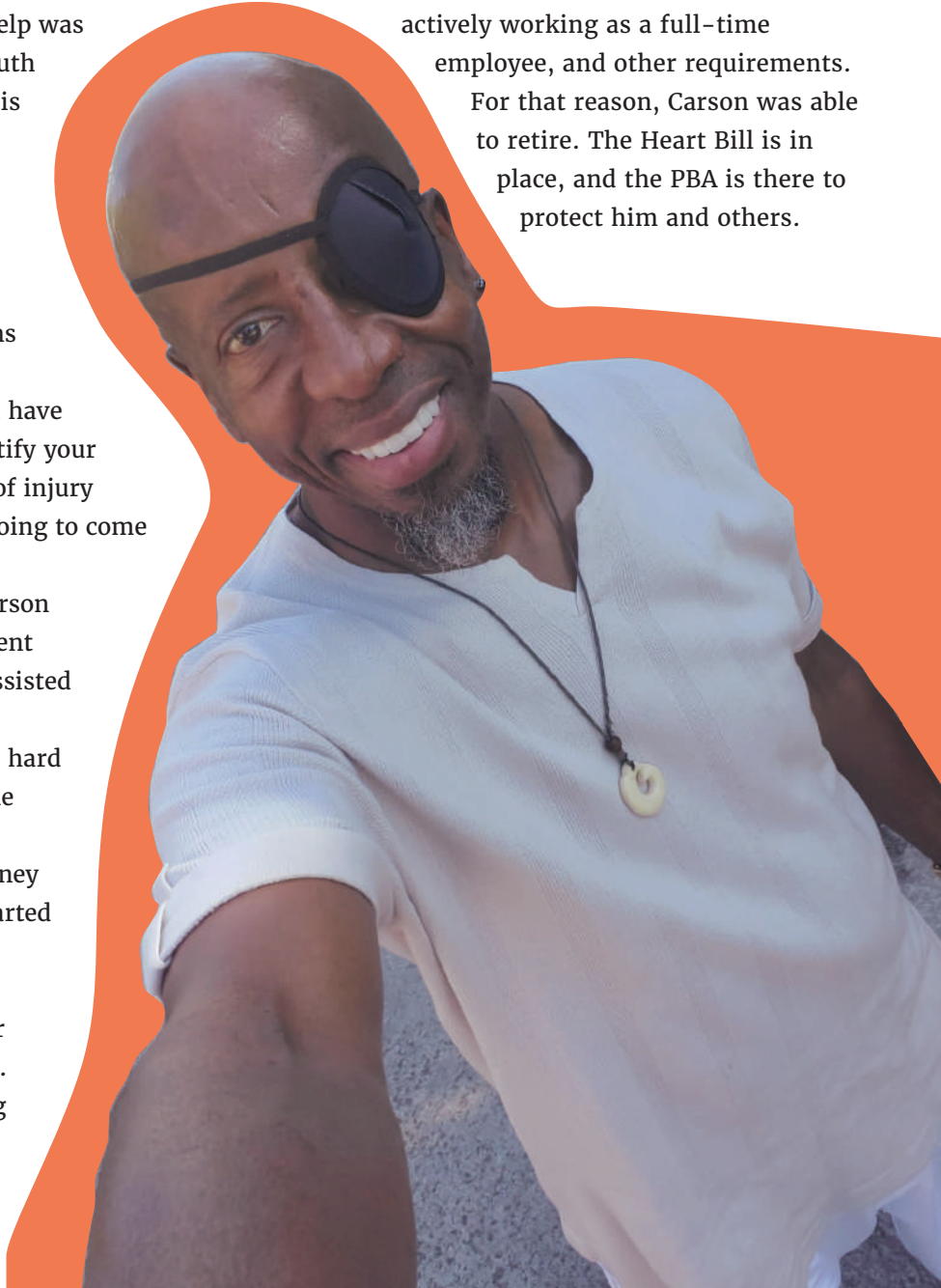
He accepted the advice and went to the optometrist, who told him he needed to call an ambulance because his eyes were bleeding. Carson was shocked since he didn’t feel anything other than blurred vision. He signed a release form and chose to go to the hospital on his own.

Doctors diagnosed him with hypertension, diabetes, and most recently, hearing loss.

#### **Understanding the Heart Bill**

The Heart/Lung Bill (Florida Statute 112.18) allows law enforcement officers, correctional officers, and firefighters to qualify for compensation benefits and disability pensions. Medical conditions covered under this bill include heart disease, hypertension, and tuberculosis.

Eligibility is based on the results of physical exams, proof that the disease developed while actively working as a full-time employee, and other requirements. For that reason, Carson was able to retire. The Heart Bill is in place, and the PBA is there to protect him and others.





# NEW SOCIAL SECURITY LAW & FIRST RESPONDERS



NICOLÁS  
VALDÉS-FAULI  
Certified Financial  
Planner™

As a financial advisor working exclusively with law enforcement officers, I often get questions about how Social Security rules affect police officers, firefighters, and other first responders. One of the biggest concerns has always been the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the

Government Pension Offset (GPO)—two rules that have historically reduced Social Security benefits for public sector workers with pensions.

Lately, this has been an even more common topic of conversation because the law has changed. The recent repeal of WEP and GPO is a big deal, and it's going to have a positive impact on a lot of first responders, both current and retired. Let's break it down in simple terms.

## What Changed?

On January 5, 2025, Congress passed a law eliminating the WEP and GPO. Here's what that means:

**No More WEP:** Previously, if you worked in a public sector job (like law enforcement) that didn't pay into Social Security and also worked in a Social Security-covered job (before, during, or after your police career), your Social Security benefit would be reduced. That reduction is now gone.

**No More GPO:** If you were married to someone who worked in the private sector and paid into Social Security, you may have expected to collect spousal or survivor benefits. But under the old rule, your police pension could wipe out most—or all—of those benefits. That's no longer the case.

These changes are retroactive to January 2024, which means some retirees will also receive back payments. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that repealing WEP will increase monthly Social Security checks by an average of \$360, while GPO repeal will boost survivor benefits by as much as \$1,190.

## How Does This Help First Responders?

Here are five real-world examples of how this change is

helping law enforcement and other first responders:

### *The Retired Officer with a Private-Sector Side Job*

A retired officer who worked private security after leaving the force was expecting a major reduction in Social Security due to WEP. Now, he will receive his full Social Security benefits on top of his pension.

### *The Officer's Surviving Spouse*

A widow whose husband was a retired detective was set to receive a reduced Social Security survivor benefit due to GPO. Now, she gets the full amount, helping her maintain financial stability.

### *The Policeman with a Part-Time Business*

A policeman who also ran a side business and paid into Social Security no longer has to worry about his Social Security check being reduced when he retires.

### *The Officer Who Left for the Private Sector*

An officer who spent 15 years in law enforcement before transitioning to a corporate security role will now receive their full Social Security benefit without a reduction.

### *The Officer Married to a Teacher*

A retired officer whose spouse was a teacher (also with a pension) can now collect spousal Social Security benefits without the GPO taking a cut.

## Final Thoughts

This is a huge win for first responders, and it corrects a long-standing issue that unfairly penalized public servants. If you're wondering how this impacts your retirement plan, let's talk—I'd be happy to walk through your specific situation and help you make the most of these changes.

---

*Nicolás Valdés-Fauli is the founder and CEO of Thin Blue Line Financial ([www.tblfinancial.com](http://www.tblfinancial.com)). Call 305-798-1842 or email [nvf@tblfinancial.com](mailto:nvf@tblfinancial.com). Nicolás has served the LEO community in South Florida for 20 years and is dedicated to helping his clients make sound decisions before and during retirement. He is an expert in all matters related to the FRS, deferred compensation and local municipal retirement plans. This material has been prepared for informational purposes only and is not intended to provide, and should not be relied upon, for tax, legal or accounting advice, nor is it intended to be a solicitation for business. Investment advisory services offered through Mai Street Financial Solutions LLC.*



**LAW ENFORCEMENT COMES TOGETHER  
FOR A CAUSE AT THE MONROE COUNTY**

# **SOFTBALL SLUGFEST FUNDRAISER**

*By Lyan Babilonia*







The Monroe County Sheriff's Office in Key West hosted the First Annual Softball Slugfest Fundraiser on November 26, 2024, in Islamorada to raise money for the Florida Keys History and Discovery Center.

The event featured an exciting friendly matchup between Law and Order, with Correction Deputies taking on Road Deputies from Monroe County, who claimed the championship with a 13-2 victory. The game served as a platform to raise almost \$2,000 for the cause.

The idea for the first match came as soon as Officer Santos Delgado heard about the center's need to expand its children's department. Officer Delgado, who has been in Corrections for the past four years, had no doubt about planning an event to help not just the institution, but the community as well. As an enforcement worker, his desire is for everyone to enjoy this gem in South Florida.

The goal was to support the museum in creating a dynamic, hands-on space for children, where interactive exhibits and engaging activities bring learning to life through play and exploration.

On the other hand, the festival was an extraordinary gathering for officers, families, and the public. Attendees enjoyed music from DJ Wood, a well-known local artist loved in town, along with food trucks, various vendors, and donors. Other organizations, such as the American Business Women's Association (ABWA) and Thunder Country Radio, also joined the initiative.

"We're thinking about making this an annual event in November, and in the future, we are open to partnering with any agency throughout Florida to raise money for a good cause in the Keys, Miami-Dade, or Broward," announced Officer Delgado.

Delgado was clear that the intention is for this annual tradition to become a reference for supporting historical

and educational institutions, as well as community service organizations.

"We're doing everything we can to help," said the detention deputy. Delgado also explained that his department wants to be more involved with the community, as corrections officers are usually busy working inside the facility, taking care of inmates and performing other duties. "The role of a correctional officer transcends the bars. They engage in outreach, clean up the community, and as coworkers, become like family," Delgado explained.

"We want to go out there and let people know that we're law enforcement too. We're here to serve, and at the same time, we're here to mingle with them," added the corrections deputy.

Definitely, the Slugfest was a stepping stone toward reaching that goal.

Delgado highlighted that it was a great opportunity for camaraderie and a chance to meet people within the agency, strengthening relationships between law enforcement officers.

"Events that bring law enforcement and the community together are crucial for building trust, understanding, and collaboration. When officers and community members interact outside of typical law enforcement contexts, it humanizes both sides. It helps break down stereotypes and fosters a sense of mutual respect", said Delgado.

For next year, the Correctional Division is looking forward to partnering with another local law enforcement agency or even the Fire Department.

He is convinced that this should happen more often, and everyone will be invited to the 2025 edition of the Softball Slugfest Fundraiser.



## REFLECTIONS

***Dr. Rick Holton, retired MDPD Lieutenant***

### **The Vitals**

- Is a Subject Matter Expert with the Miami Police Training Center
- 30-Year Veteran of the Miami-Dade Police Department
- Received his Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from North Carolina A&T State University
- Received his Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of Miami from Nova Southeastern University
- Received his Doctorate Degree in Organizational Leadership and Conflict Resolution from Nova University
- Currently serves as an adjunct professor at St. Thomas University in Miami, Florida
- Certified trainer for the Criminal Justice Institute
- Instructor for "Struggle Well"

### **How I started in law enforcement**

What initially drew you to a career in law enforcement, and how did your journey with the Miami-Dade Police Department unfold over 30 years?

Well ... actually I was leaving to college to hopefully play professional football. My father suggested that I come home and get into law enforcement. I always wanted to be a lawyer so my Dad suggested that I join the Department and they might actually pay tuition. Being an only child, I listened to my Dad; I came back home and three, four, five years went by and I never went to law school. This is now my 50th Year in law enforcement.

### **THE CONVERSATION**

#### **CAREER AND LAW ENFORCEMENT EXPERIENCE**

**1. What is a Subject Matter Expert?** A Subject Matter Expert is a person who has advanced knowledge in different subjects. I gear more to supervision, management and leadership and use of force by helping to construct courses for the City of Miami.

**2. You've held diverse roles within MDPD, from Uniform Patrol to Organized Crime. Which assignment challenged you the most, and why?** My most challenging

assignment was as a Lieutenant in the Northside District because it gave me an opportunity to really take a closer look at the community and engage law enforcement to a better perspective. It gave me a little authority, a leeway, and the power of making a lot of decisions; not just for the community but also affecting law enforcement as well.

Bridging the gap has always been my concern; being in that position allowed me to do it more effectively. I spent time on the McDuffie Riots; that was an eye-opener. From a larger perspective, the community was



crying out for a number of years. There were a lot of problems, community and policing inclusive. Then one day it erupted; it gave me a clear view of what was needed.

## LEADERSHIP & TRAINING

**3. What inspired you to transition into training and leadership development after retirement?** I've always had a knack for training. Most of my family members are educators; there were also a couple of trainers when I was becoming an officer. I really liked what they were doing and I thought to myself: Wow .. I like what he or she is doing. I wish I could do the same. That inspiration led me to help others through education and training. So, I put everything together- voila! I came up with a plan and made it work.

**4. What leadership mistakes do you see most often in law enforcement, and how can they be avoided?** Failure to communicate. A lot of people hear but do not listen, thus we fail to communicate. I find that to be one of the biggest problems we have. We can avoid this by talk and trust. You can't buy trust or connection; you must develop it. Take time to know one another, take time to listen. What I do is shut down and go to your side, listen to what you are saying; coming together we can resolve. Years ago it was "Shut up and do as I say. If I say jump, you must say how high". That was back then. Now we start looking at the different generations and how things have changed. It's more difficult because of social media but I feel it's getting a lot better than what we had back then.

**5. What is the most important quality a police officer must have today?** Empathy. Most definitely: empathy. You have to put yourself in somebody else's position. When we have more empathetic leadership and police officers who understand what people are going through, things will get a lot better.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION & DIVERSITY

**6. What strategies do you teach officers for de-escalating tense or potentially violent situations?**

Implementing understanding, taking control of the situation. A lot of times, people misconstrue de-escalation. Once you understand the situation and take control, de-escalation begins. That's when the understanding and the communication starts, the resources needed come in. When you find out where the other person is coming from, what they're going through or suffering about .. For example: someone is stealing food and you find out through listening "my mama and papa are in jail, I have no food". When you understand that,

the de-escalation becomes more effective.

**7. In today's climate, law enforcement agencies face heightened scrutiny. How do you guide officers to maintain professionalism and trust in their communities?** I love the 'park and walk' concept that was implemented by the city of Miami years ago. I believe if you just drive in your car and all you do is grin and wave it creates a disservice to the community; but when you get out of your vehicle and walk and talk, you get to know families. You are now communicating at a level that you did not have before. I want them to say, 'where is my officer'; back in the day we called them 'officer friendly'.



You don't have to talk about crime, you can talk about basketball, academics, anything. We're starting to put basketballs in officers' cars so that when they get out and have a conversation the engagement is different.

## REFLECTIONS & ADVICE

**8. If you could change one thing about modern policing, what would it be and why?** I'd like more empathy and understanding from the organizations and the community as well.



I would like to see us not rely so much on social media as we do today. Social media puts out personal perspectives. You need to understand the who, what, when, where, and why prior to making judgements. Officers have to get out, shake hands, kiss babies. When you don't do that there is chaos.

**9. What advice do you have for young officers just starting their careers in law enforcement?** Grow slow. Grow slow so that you can understand and gain knowledge from all perspectives. Look, observe, ask questions, don't be shy, don't be afraid, take advice. If you don't like that particular advice, seek another person's opinion. Have a '3 to 5'. Have a mentor in law enforcement, a trusted friend and someone outside the field who can offer honest advice, even when it's tough to hear .. someone who is going to tell you that you're wrong and you can accept it. It's important for you to have that .. the '3 to 5'. Also, mind and body is important. If you don't use it, you lose it!

**10. Looking back, what are you most proud of in your career?** I'm proud and so happy that I'm in a position where I can help others. A lot of people, a lot of my friends don't have this opportunity. A lot of them are fully retired, some deceased, some with no activities. I don't consider being a Subject Matter Expert or

Supervisor 'work' because I enjoy doing it and I'll continue doing it. I feel very very lucky to be in a position where I can reach out and touch people. Make a difference in their lives.







MEMBERS ONLY

SECTION

## *Celebrating South Florida PBA members and the way they serve every day*

### Cops & Careers: A Day of Inspiration

**South Florida PBA members visited local schools for Career Day, inspiring students with stories of service and community dedication. Through engaging talks and hands-on demonstrations, they encouraged young minds to explore careers in law enforcement and beyond.**



**Doral PD:** The Doral Police Department brought excitement to KLA Academy's Career Day with interactive demonstrations from their Motors and K9 units. Students got a close-up look at cutting-edge law enforcement technology and learned about the skills officers use to keep the community safe.



Sheriff Rick Ramsay and members of the Monroe County Sheriff's Office visited schools across the county this week, reading to students and fostering community connections through engaging storytelling.

**Miami-Dade County Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation:** The Miami-Dade County Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Community Outreach Team toured schools across the county for Career Day, educating students on the essential work of correctional officers.



North Miami Police Department officers made a positive impact during Career Day, visiting local schools to share insights about law enforcement. Students received goody bags and had the chance to meet a police horse, making the experience even more memorable.

**Officers in Pinecrest are forging deeper connections with local youth through a newly launched initiative designed to go beyond the traditional Career Day experience.**



The Village of Pinecrest Police Community Resource Team kicked off the "Officer Friendly Initiative" today to strengthen bonds between youth and law enforcement. Officers connected with families, shared educational materials, and built trust in a welcoming atmosphere. This initiative is just the start of their ongoing efforts to foster mutual respect with the community's youth.

## Local Heroes in Washington D.C.

**South Florida PBA members played an important role in the inauguration of the 47th President of the United States, showcasing their dedication and professionalism on a national stage. From providing security to supporting various events, their involvement highlighted the strong commitment of local law enforcement to serving the country. Their presence in Washington, D.C., was a testament to their teamwork and pride in representing South Florida.**



FIU Police Department officers took part in the Swearing-In Ceremony for Outside Law Enforcement Agencies during the inauguration of the 47th President. FIUPD and SWPD worked side by side in Washington, D.C., just as they do in the 305—showcasing their strong partnership and commitment to service.



The City of Sweetwater Police Officers were in Washington, D.C. on Inauguration Day, serving and protecting as part of the security team for the 47th President, Donald J. Trump. Their presence highlighted the vital role local law enforcement played in ensuring the safety and success of this historic event. Beyond Duty, For the Community



FIU Police Department officers also joined the Calhoun County Sheriff's Office and U.S. Military members in Washington, D.C., at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, where the Commander in Chief Ball and Liberty Inaugural Ball was held. A strong team working together in support of the nation's celebrations.



## Beyond The Badge

Police officers across the region are going beyond their everyday duties to make meaningful contributions to the community. From visiting schools to inspiring future leaders, their efforts highlight a strong commitment to building trust, fostering connections, and making a positive impact.



Monroe County Sheriff's Office members teamed up with Reef Relief, local residents, and community partners to clean up areas near Winn-Dixie in Key Largo and the south end of the Bahia Honda Bridge. The team also tackled graffiti removal and cleared abandoned scooters at Key West International Airport, contributing to a cleaner and safer environment for the community.



Baby Bithia Jenna Debe Petion, born in a ride-sharing vehicle last January, was celebrated with a joyful birthday event at the North Miami Police Department. The gathering reunited Miami-Dade Fire Department members, Chief Gause, and Sergeant Numa Richard with the baby they helped deliver, creating a heartwarming celebration of life and community.



The City of Opa-locka's MLK Walk was a powerful tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s enduring legacy and vision for the world. The atmosphere was charged with a collective spirit to continue pushing for a more just and unified future.



The 6th Annual Jeff Stone & Veronica De Candido Neighborhood Watch Block Party brought together the Village of Pinecrest Police Community Resource Team, Councilwoman Shannon Del Prado, and local residents. Officers took the opportunity to connect with residents, share essential safety information, and celebrate the spirit of the community.



## Honoring Excellence in Service



At the January Regular City Commission Meeting, the Sunny Isles Beach Police Department honored City Manager Stan Morris with the Chief's Special Recognition Award. His leadership and dedication have significantly strengthened the department, ensuring officers have the resources and support needed to protect the community. The recognition coincided with Community Manager Appreciation Day, also celebrating Deputy City Manager Susan Simpson and others who prioritize public safety.



Detective Amanda Ranallo was honored as Officer of the Year at the recent City Commission Workshop. Her diligent investigative work led to the arrest of a suspect involved in a domestic armed robbery, resulting in multiple charges. Previously recognized as Officer of the Quarter and recipient of the Anthony Damato Legacy Award, Ranallo's outstanding service continues to make a lasting impact on the community.

## Farewell to a Faithful Hero

The Sheriff's Office is deeply saddened by the loss of K9 Roxi, a loyal and brave member of the K9 Narcotics Unit. Roxi's unwavering commitment to safeguarding the community throughout her career has left an indelible mark of courage and dedication. Sheriff Rosie shared her profound grief, honoring Roxi as a hero who impacted many lives through her service. The legacy of her devotion to protecting others will endure, inspiring those she served and the team she worked alongside.







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# LAW ENFORCEMENT AWARDS GALA 2025

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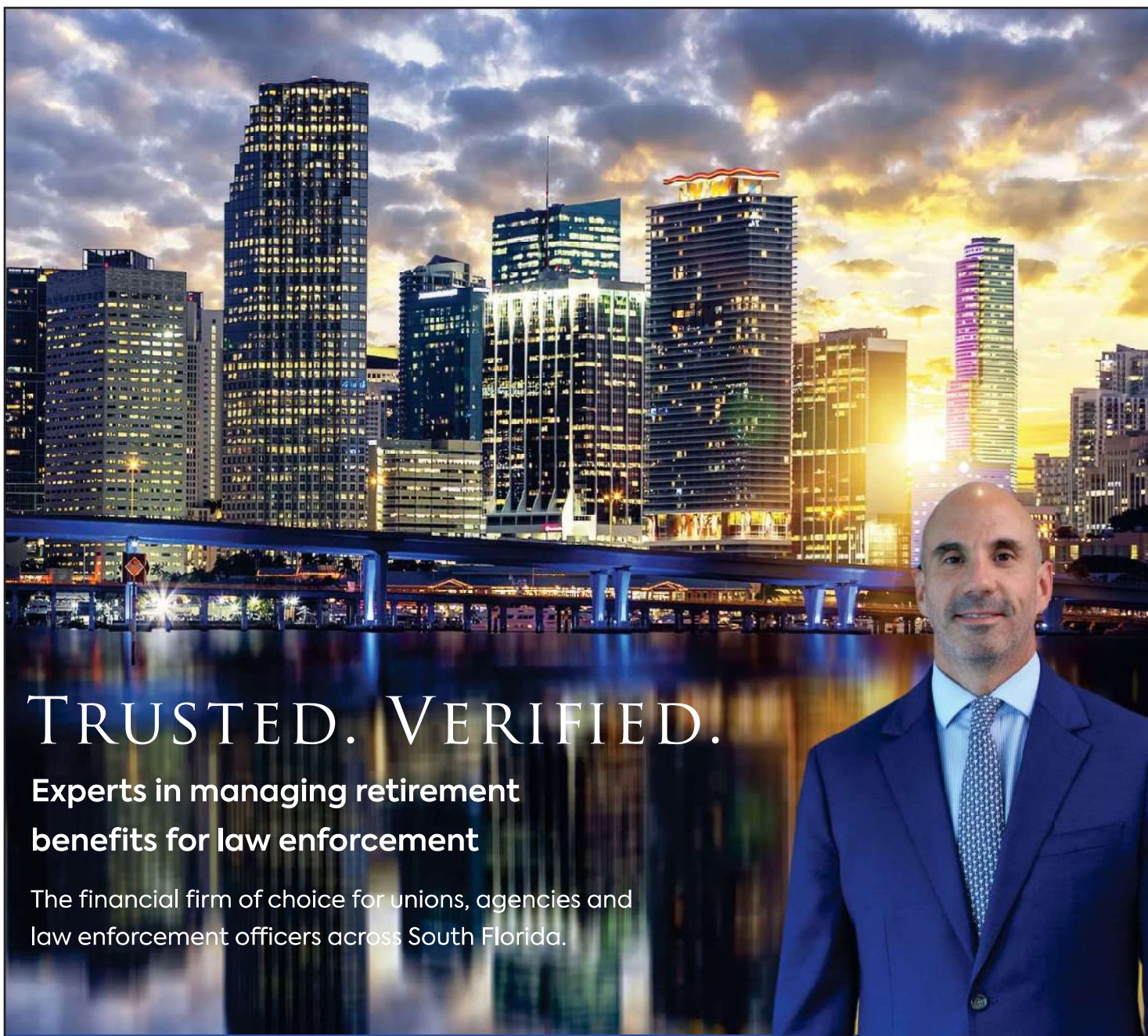
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