

## **FLORIDA'S SPECIAL RISK POPULATION DIES ALMOST TWELVE YEARS EARLIER THAN GENERAL POPULATION:**

Brevard County, Florida Sheriff J.R. "Jack" Parker has conducted a Florida Mortality Study, comparing the mortality of Florida law enforcement and corrections officers to the Florida population in general. During the 2011 legislative session, changes made to the Florida Retirement System extended by five years both the age and years of service necessary to retire for members of the special risk class, which includes law enforcement and corrections officers. The stated justification for the change was assumption that special risk class members are living longer and now have life spans similar to those of the general population. This assumption was derived without benefit of conducting any studies in the State of Florida. In addition, the assumption directly conflicts with well-established medical theory and other scientifically-conducted longitudinal studies regarding lifespan of law enforcement officers. To verify whether there is a lifespan difference between law enforcement and corrections special risk class members and that of the general population in Florida, data were derived from FRS and the Florida Department of Health. The comprehensive data were analyzed and compiled to establish an accurate "average age at death" comparison between FRS special risk members and the State of Florida general population. Actual death rates between the two groups were compared during the most recent decade, beginning in the year 2000 and ending in 2009. Determination was made that average age at death for FRS special risk class members assigned to law enforcement and corrections duties was 62.4 years, while the average age of death for Florida's general population was 11.8 years longer at 74.2 years – a lifespan of almost 20% greater. The report clearly demonstrates that FRS special risk class members assigned to law enforcement and corrections duties do not enjoy a similar lifespan compared to the population they serve, and the 2011 changes to FRS requiring officers to work to age 60 were based on an invalid assumption. Thereupon, Sheriff Parker requests the Florida Legislature to pass a bill this session returning special risk members in FRS to the appropriate special risk retirement date of age of 55 or 25 years of service. Further, those FRS special risk members hired on or after July 1, 2011 should be retroactively included in the legislative change. Yes, Sir.