



Good afternoon, everyone,

We're going to start the holiday weekend with some good news! Representative Jeff Holcomb filed HB 993: First Responders and Crime Scene Investigators on December 21, 2023. This Bill has two major changes to s. 112.1815, F.S. as it relates to us, they are:

- Defines "First Responders" to include 9-1-1 Public Safety Telecommunicators (PST).
- Provides certain workmen's compensation benefits for stress-related illness for 9-1-1 PSTs and Crime Scene Investigators.

This is a significant step forward, but we still have plenty of work. We are working through our lobbyists to secure a sponsor for the Senate Companion bill to HB 993. We still need to better understand how many Sheriffs support the bill for us to have more meaningful conversations with our lawmakers.

We also need to get HB 993 heard in committee. The first Committee it will be assigned to is the Constitutional Rights, Rule of Law, and Government Operations Subcommittee, chaired by Representative Spencer Roach.

This leads us to what our members can do at this point. Here are some action items to help us in our next steps:

- We need to ascertain how many Sheriffs support the recognition of 911 PSTs as First Responders. This must be concrete, an email, or, like Volusia County, a proclamation. We also received a copy of a proclamation from St. John's County BOCC recognizing 911 PSTs as First Responders. Please let your organization's Legislative Committee know your Sheriff's position.
- We are beginning to line up co-sponsors for HB 993. At first, we will be focusing on recruiting Republican lawmakers and those that co-sponsored last session. After the initial round of co-sponsors, we will open it up. Please provide those Representatives' names if you heard support during the Legislative Delegation meetings.
- We need to show support to the members of the first Committee. This can be done at the local level. The Committee Members are listed on the www.myfloridahouse.gov website. If you live in one of the members' districts, you need to email, call, or visit the district office to urge support for HB 993. Also, having Sheriffs contact Rep. Roach or their local representative on the committee is helpful.
- We need to continue raising awareness of what we do. During the holidays, it's great to emphasize that 9-1-1 PSTs are always there to answer the call for those in need. While we like to promote the holiday spirit in our centers, we need to demonstrate it's not all door decorating contests and cookie trays. *9-1-1 is always on duty, ready to answer the call!*

We appreciate all the assistance we have received from our memberships. We will continue to pass on information as we receive it. Our next Legislative Town Hall will be held on January 5, 2024, at 3:00 pm. Announcements and meeting links will be distributed during the week of the meeting.

We hope everyone enjoys their holiday season! We look forward to a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2024!