

Committee Substitute for
Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 1856

An act relating to law enforcement officers and correctional officers; amending s. 112.532, F.S.; revising provisions relating to disciplinary actions against officers; providing grounds for civil actions by officers; providing for officers to obtain investigative reports; revising guidelines for questioning officers who are being investigated; providing for the production of an investigative report and supporting documents in a disciplinary case against a law enforcement or correctional officer to that officer prior to the imposition of certain disciplinary actions; providing for such records to remain confidential pursuant to the current public-records exemption; providing that such provision is not to be construed to provide a law enforcement or correctional officer with a property interest in a position of employment; amending s. 112.533, F.S.; providing that an established system for the receipt, investigation, and determination of complaints shall be the exclusive procedure used by law enforcement and correctional agencies; providing for legal counsel or a representative of the officer's choice to review a complaint filed against the officer and all statements made by the complainant and witnesses; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Subsections (1), (3), and (4) of section 112.532, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

112.532 Law enforcement officers' and correctional officers' rights.—All law enforcement officers and correctional officers employed by or appointed to a law enforcement agency or a correctional agency shall have the following rights and privileges:

(1) **RIGHTS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS AND CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS WHILE UNDER INVESTIGATION.**—Whenever a law enforcement officer or correctional officer is under investigation and subject to interrogation by members of his or her agency for any reason which could lead to disciplinary action, demotion, or dismissal, such interrogation shall be conducted under the following conditions:

(a) The interrogation shall be conducted at a reasonable hour, preferably at a time when the law enforcement officer or correctional officer is on duty, unless the seriousness of the investigation is of such a degree that immediate action is required.

(b) The interrogation shall take place either at the office of the command of the investigating officer or at the office of the local precinct, police unit, or correctional unit in which the incident allegedly occurred, as designated by the investigating officer or agency.

(c) The law enforcement officer or correctional officer under investigation shall be informed of the rank, name, and command of the officer in charge of the investigation, the interrogating officer, and all persons present during the interrogation. All questions directed to the officer under interrogation shall be asked by or and through one interrogator during any one investigative interrogation, unless specifically waived by the officer under investigation at any one time.

(d) The law enforcement officer or correctional officer under investigation shall be informed of the nature of the investigation prior to any interrogation, and he or she shall be informed of the name of all complainants.

(e) Interrogating sessions shall be for reasonable periods and shall be timed to allow for such personal necessities and rest periods as are reasonably necessary.

(f) The law enforcement officer or correctional officer under interrogation shall not be subjected to offensive language or be threatened with transfer, dismissal, or disciplinary action. No promise or reward shall be made as an inducement to answer any questions.

(g) The formal interrogation of a law enforcement officer or correctional officer, including all recess periods, shall be recorded on audio tape, or otherwise preserved in such a manner as to allow a transcript to be prepared, and there shall be no unrecorded questions or statements. Upon the request of the interrogated officer, a copy of any such recording of the interrogation session must be made available to the interrogated officer no later than 72 hours, excluding holidays and weekends, following said interrogation.

(h) If the law enforcement officer or correctional officer under interrogation is under arrest, or is likely to be placed under arrest as a result of the interrogation, he or she shall be completely informed of all his or her rights prior to the commencement of the interrogation.

(i) At the request of any law enforcement officer or correctional officer under investigation, he or she shall have the right to be represented by counsel or any other representative of his or her choice, who shall be present at all times during such interrogation whenever the interrogation relates to the officer's continued fitness for law enforcement or correctional service.

(j) Notwithstanding the rights and privileges provided by this part, this part does not limit the right of an agency to discipline or to pursue criminal charges against an officer.

(3) CIVIL SUITS BROUGHT BY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS OR CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS.—Every law enforcement officer or correctional officer shall have the right to bring civil suit against any person, group of persons, or organization or corporation, or the head of such organization or corporation, for damages, either pecuniary or otherwise, suffered during the performance of the officer's official duties, or for abridgment of the officer's civil rights arising out of the officer's performance of official duties, or for filing a complaint against the officer which the person knew was false.

when it was filed. This section does not establish a separate civil action against the officer's employing law enforcement agency for the investigation and processing of a complaint filed under this part.

(4)(a) NOTICE OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION.—No dismissal, demotion, transfer, reassignment, or other personnel action which might result in loss of pay or benefits or which might otherwise be considered a punitive measure shall be taken against any law enforcement officer or correctional officer unless such law enforcement officer or correctional officer is notified of the action and the reason or reasons therefor prior to the effective date of such action.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of s. 112.533(2), whenever a law enforcement officer or correctional officer is subject to disciplinary action consisting of suspension with loss of pay, demotion, or dismissal, the officer shall, upon request, be provided with a complete copy of the investigative report and supporting documents and with the opportunity to address the findings in the report with the employing law enforcement agency prior to the imposition of the disciplinary action consisting of suspension with loss of pay, demotion, or dismissal. The contents of the complaint and investigation shall remain confidential until such time as the employing law enforcement agency makes a final determination whether or not to issue a notice of disciplinary action consisting of suspension with loss of pay, demotion, or dismissal. This paragraph shall not be construed to provide law enforcement officers with a property interest or expectancy of continued employment, employment, or appointment as a law enforcement officer.

Section 2. Subsection (1), paragraph (a) of subsection (2), and subsection (4) of section 112.533, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

112.533 Receipt and processing of complaints.—

(1) Every law enforcement agency and correctional agency shall establish and put into operation a system for the receipt, investigation, and determination of complaints received by such agency from any person, which shall be the procedure for investigating a complaint against a law enforcement and correctional officer and for determining whether to proceed with disciplinary action or to file disciplinary charges, notwithstanding any other law or ordinance to the contrary. This subsection does not preclude the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission from exercising its authority under chapter 943.

(2)(a) A complaint filed against a law enforcement officer or correctional officer with a law enforcement agency or correctional agency and all information obtained pursuant to the investigation by the agency of such complaint shall be confidential and exempt from the provisions of s. 119.07(1) until the investigation ceases to be active, or until the agency head or the agency head's designee provides written notice to the officer who is the subject of the complaint, either personally or by mail, that the agency has either:

1. Concluded the investigation with a finding not to proceed with disciplinary action or to file charges; or

2. Concluded the investigation with a finding to proceed with disciplinary action or to file charges.

Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions, the officer who is the subject of the complaint, along with legal counsel or any other representative of his or her choice, may review the complaint and all statements regardless of form made by the complainant and witnesses immediately prior to the beginning of the investigative interview. If a witness to a complaint is incarcerated in a correctional facility and may be under the supervision of, or have contact with, the officer under investigation, only the names and written statements of the complainant and nonincarcerated witnesses may be reviewed by the officer under investigation immediately prior to the beginning of the investigative interview.

(4) Any person who is a participant in an internal investigation, including the complainant, the subject of the investigation and the subject's legal counsel or a representative of his or her choice, the investigator conducting the investigation, and any witnesses in the investigation, who willfully discloses any information obtained pursuant to the agency's investigation, including, but not limited to, the identity of the officer under investigation, the nature of the questions asked, information revealed, or documents furnished in connection with a confidential internal investigation of an agency, before such complaint, document, action, or proceeding becomes a public record as provided in this section commits a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083. However, this subsection does not limit a law enforcement or correctional officer's ability to gain access to information under paragraph (2)(a). Additionally, a sheriff, police chief, or other head of a law enforcement agency, or his or her designee, is not precluded by this section from acknowledging the existence of a complaint and the fact that an investigation is underway.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2003.

Approved by the Governor June 12, 2003.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 12, 2003.