

Committee on Transportation

CS/CS/CS/HB 489 — Railroad Police Officers

by Judiciary Committee; Justice Appropriations Subcommittee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Rep. Stone and others (CS/CS/CS/SB 1110 by Appropriations Committee; Criminal Justice Committee; Transportation Committee; and Senator Evers)

Section 354.01, F.S., authorizes the Governor to appoint “special officers,” which are persons employed by railroads or other common carriers for the protection of the railroad’s employees, passengers, freight, equipment, and properties. Currently, special officers are required to meet the law enforcement qualifications and training requirements of s. 943.13(1)-(10), F.S.

The bill amends s. 354.01, F.S., to:

- provide that until the governor either appoints or rejects an application for appointment, the railroad or common carrier may temporarily employ the person as a special officer if the person complies with the qualifications for employment as a law enforcement officer in s. 943.13, F.S.;
- require such special officers to have the same training as a law enforcement officer in accordance with ss. 943.13 and 943.135(1), F.S., relating to continuing training and education requirements;
- provide that a Class I, Class II, or Class III railroad is considered an employing agency for purposes of ss. 943.13 and 943.135(1), F.S., and
- direct such railroads to pay all costs associated with the training and continuing education of employed special officers.

The bill also amends s. 784.07, F.S., which reclassifies assault and battery offenses committed against specified officers, to include railroad special officers employed by a Class I, II, or III railroad and appointed or pending appointment by the Governor.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2013.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0