

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

BILL: SB 2212

SPONSOR: Senator Crist

SUBJECT: Medal of Honor

DATE: February 24, 2002 REVISED: 02/26/02 _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Wilson</u>	<u>Wilson</u>	<u>GO</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
2.	_____	_____	<u>CJ</u>	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

The bill permits the Governor to award a medal of heroism to any law enforcement, corrections, correctional probation officer, firefighter, emergency medical technician, or paramedic who has exhibited gallant and intrepid behavior in the line of duty.

This bill creates a new, undesignated section of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Florida law provides several existing methods of recognizing the achievements of public employees.

Any state agency may recognize its public safety employees' extraordinary achievements through the award of a Medal of Valor. Section 112.194, F.S., specifies that the medal, to be worn on the uniform itself, may be secured by the employer for a maximum expense of \$250. Additionally, ss. 683.11 and 683.115, F.S., respectively, make specific legal recognition in the month of May for law enforcement appreciation and memorial.

Section 112.193, F.S., provides that each retired or deceased officer may be presented with a commemorative service award to include presentation of a uniform and personal sidearm.

Sections 112.19 and 112.191, F.S., confer financial and educational benefits on the families of designated public safety officers who have died in the line of duty. Additionally, the Florida Retirement System, as well as many of the other 500 local government pension plans, make specific provision for enhanced disability and death benefits for officers and employees who have sustained injuries that were job-related and in the line of duty.

Section 110.1245, F.S., permits state agencies to expend up to \$100 for the purpose of procuring employment and service recognition programs.

State agency volunteers are permitted also under s. 110.504, F.S., to receive commemorative service awards in recognition of their contributions to an agency's mission.

The recognition of distinguished service is not limited to state employees. Section 231.6255, F.S., creates a Teacher of the Year designation in which the Department of Education selects a district school board instructional member who will spend one year promoting teaching as a career.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1. The bill permits the Governor to award a medal of heroism to law enforcement, correctional and correctional probation officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, and paramedics upon the demonstration of gallant and intrepid behavior. The affected officers must be certified or licensed under their respective regulatory statutes and must have engaged in perilous activities beyond the call of duty that placed them in great personal jeopardy.

Nominators of such persons must make written application to the Governor, who may refer such requests to the Department of Law Enforcement or Department of Community Affairs, or a private association, for advice on recommended actions.

Section 2. The act takes effect July 1, 2002.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

The terrorist attack precipitated on the United States of America on September 11, 2001, resulted in 3000 deaths. Many of the deaths and subsequent injuries were experienced by public safety employees in the aftermath of the tragedy as a direct result of victim rescue and recovery attempts.

VIII. Amendments:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.
