



# Florida Police Benevolent Association, Inc.

*The Voice of Florida's Law Enforcement Officers*

March 2, 2022

Dear Bargaining Unit Members,

Today, the PBA filed a class action grievance on your behalf for the Sheriff's continued failure to provide you the step increase that you are entitled to under the collective bargaining agreement. As I am sure you are all aware, the Sheriff had a duty to provide all eligible members their step increase on October 1, 2021. As the PBA and the Sheriff were in ongoing negotiations at the time, the PBA had great hopes that the Sheriff would give the required step increase once the re-openers were ratified. Also, as you know, the re-openers were overwhelmingly rejected by your bargaining unit.

The PBA has attempted to get the Sheriff back at the negotiating table as he is required by Florida Statute, but this has proven largely unsuccessful. The Sheriff continually proposes the same exact articles that were voted down in October 2021. The PBA has informed the Sheriff's negotiation team, that we believe this to be an Unfair Labor Practice by the Sheriff as it does not appear to be good faith negotiating. The PBA was also given information from the Sheriff that he does not intend on negotiating any further on the re-openers. The PBA has made it abundantly clear that the bargaining unit's only issue is the Sheriff's position on take home cars. The PBA presented a proposal to the Sheriff's bargaining team on January 25, 2022, and was subsequently told not to waste our time on any future negotiations as the Sheriff did not intend to budge on his prior position.

The PBA submitted a letter to ACSO explaining that this position was indeed an unfair labor practice. In response, an additional negotiation session was agreed upon and scheduled for February 24, 2022. The negotiation session was unproductive as I mentioned previously as the Sheriff's team once again only presented the same articles that have previously been voted down. The PBA explained once again that this was an unfair labor practice. The Sheriff's team stated that they would explain this to the Sheriff and get back to us. On March 1, 2022, ACSO General Counsel Rush sent an email to President Branaman explaining that the Sheriff would not agree to the proposal we submitted in January and was not going to budge from the article he presented in September of 2021. The PBA intends on filing an unfair labor practice against the Sheriff next week not only on this issue but several additional issues.

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Additionally, during the February negotiation meeting, I also informed the Sheriff's General Counsel and bargaining team that the Sheriff was continuing to violate the collective bargaining agreement by not providing the step increase and if this was not processed immediately, we would have no choice but to begin litigating the issue.

Today, we were informed that the Budgeting and Accounting Department processed your step increase on February 25, 2022 and on February 28, 2022, the Sheriff instructed the Budgeting and Accounting department to reverse the step increase once again. As part of the evidence we received, it clearly indicates that on October 1, 2021, the step increases were set to be given and were actively reversed in violation of the collective bargaining agreement. This information was disheartening and disappointing and leaves the PBA no choice but to engage in litigation to give you the step increase you are entitled to.

The Sheriff's continued defiance of the law is extremely discouraging, but I wanted to take a minute to let you know that the PBA is working diligently for your rights. As a PBA attorney for the last eleven years, I have never seen the issues at the Alachua County Sheriff's Office that I am seeing under this current administration. Please know that we are working on EVERY SINGLE ISSUE that we are being advised about and although you may not know about all the things we are actively working on, I promise you we are. Please do not hesitate to contact our legal department if you are aware of additional contract violations and issues that need to be addressed. In unity, we are strong and we will continue to fight every day for the rights you have so respectfully earned. Our men and women in public service should be honored and rewarded for everything that you have put up with during these very difficult times in society. We are saddened that it does not appear to be the case at the Alachua Sheriff's Office currently.

Please remain safe and know that the PBA has your back and will continue to do so in these tough times.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Dobson Webster  
General Counsel  
Florida Police Benevolent Association