

SB 1142 – Offenses Against Firefighters (Identical HB 589)

This bill amends s. 782.065, F.S., adding “firefighter, as defined in s. 633.102, F.S.” to the enhanced penalty for murder of a law enforcement officer, correctional officer, or correctional probation officer. The enhanced penalty states that “a defendant shall be sentenced to life imprisonment without eligibility for release upon findings by the trier of fact that, beyond a reasonable doubt” that a murder or attempted murder took place, with a list of victims that would make the offender eligible for such an enhancement.

Per DOC, in FY 18-19, 923 offenders were admitted to prison for committing murder. Due to data limitations, the number of offenders in this group who are eligible for such enhancements is not known. Average sentence length was 292.9 months (24.4 years), and one offender was admitted to prison for manslaughter of law enforcement/EMT/firefighter (16 years). Per FBI, in CY 2018, 4 law enforcement officers were feloniously killed in Florida.

While it is not known how many offenders currently receive this enhanced penalty, nor is it known how many additional offenders would receive this enhancement under the amended bill, the rarity of murder and the long sentences associated with such an offense would likely prevent a significant impact on prison beds from occurring.

CONFERENCE ADOPTED ESTIMATE: Positive Insignificant

Requested by: Senate & House