



**Florida Police Benevolent Association, Inc.**  
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## **Officer Fitzgerald's death will not be in vain**

**Tallahassee:** On Wednesday, June 25th, Correctional Officer Donna Fitzgerald was violently killed by a career criminal after discovering the inmate hiding in a storage shed at Tomoka Correctional Institution. The entire law enforcement family is truly saddened by this unnecessary loss of life.

“Florida has lost a real hero,” said Jim Baiardi, President of the State Correctional Officers Chapter of the Florida Police Benevolent Association. “Officer Fitzgerald was a mother, a long-time employee of the Department of Corrections, and will be sorely missed.”

Officer Fitzgerald's death will not be in vain.

“I put the Florida Legislature on notice during the last legislative session,” continued Baiardi. “It was only a matter of time before an officer would be seriously hurt or killed, or inmates would violently take over an institution due to the short term mentality of legislators who continue to cut correctional and correctional probation officer positions from the Department of Corrections budget. Enough is enough.”

The Florida Legislature must properly fund the most important function of government -- public safety. The Florida PBA points out that inadequate salaries and legislative cuts to officer staffing have placed every officer, and the public, in grave danger.

“We are in a hole right now and we ask legislators to stop digging. We need more money for salaries and more officer positions to address the critical staffing shortages facing this state,” said Baiardi.

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