

Florida is being harmed, embarrassed and exposed. State officials are in the final stage (after prolonged legislative session overtime) of crafting a new state budget that has the effect of defunding and disabling the Florida Highway Patrol.

This irresponsibility emerges despite surging road rage and reckless driving together with rising roadway crimes that are costing thousands of avoidable deaths, hundreds of thousands of serious injuries, and billions of dollars in economic impact annually. FHP is being handcuffed and defunded, prevented from effectively serving its primary mission.

The awful, inexcusable truth is that these tragic consequences mount daily despite record high levels of enormous available funds that are spent on officials' personal and political agendas, with virtually no investment in highway safety. Officials must fix this now or accept ownership of those consequences. Not a good future campaign platform or performance record for any of them.

Floridians suffer while state officials prevent retention and recruitment at FHP. Needed are much better paid Troopers and many more Troopers. Visibility, deterrence, and enforcement would dramatically improve public safety. End the long standing, false and self-serving political rhetoric -- and enable and expand the Florida Highway Patrol.

FHP Troopers are the lowest paid in the USA and are severely understaffed. Compare Florida to other states - see for yourself.

**Paul Novack** • 2nd2ndPaul D. Novack, P.A. Attorney and Counselor at Law; Cold Case Volunteer Team Leader; Florida Highway Patrol Advisory Council; 6 Term MayorPaul D. Novack, P.A. Attorney and Counselor at Law; Cold Case Volunteer Team Leader; Florida Highway Patrol Advisory Council; 6 Term Mayor1d • Edited •