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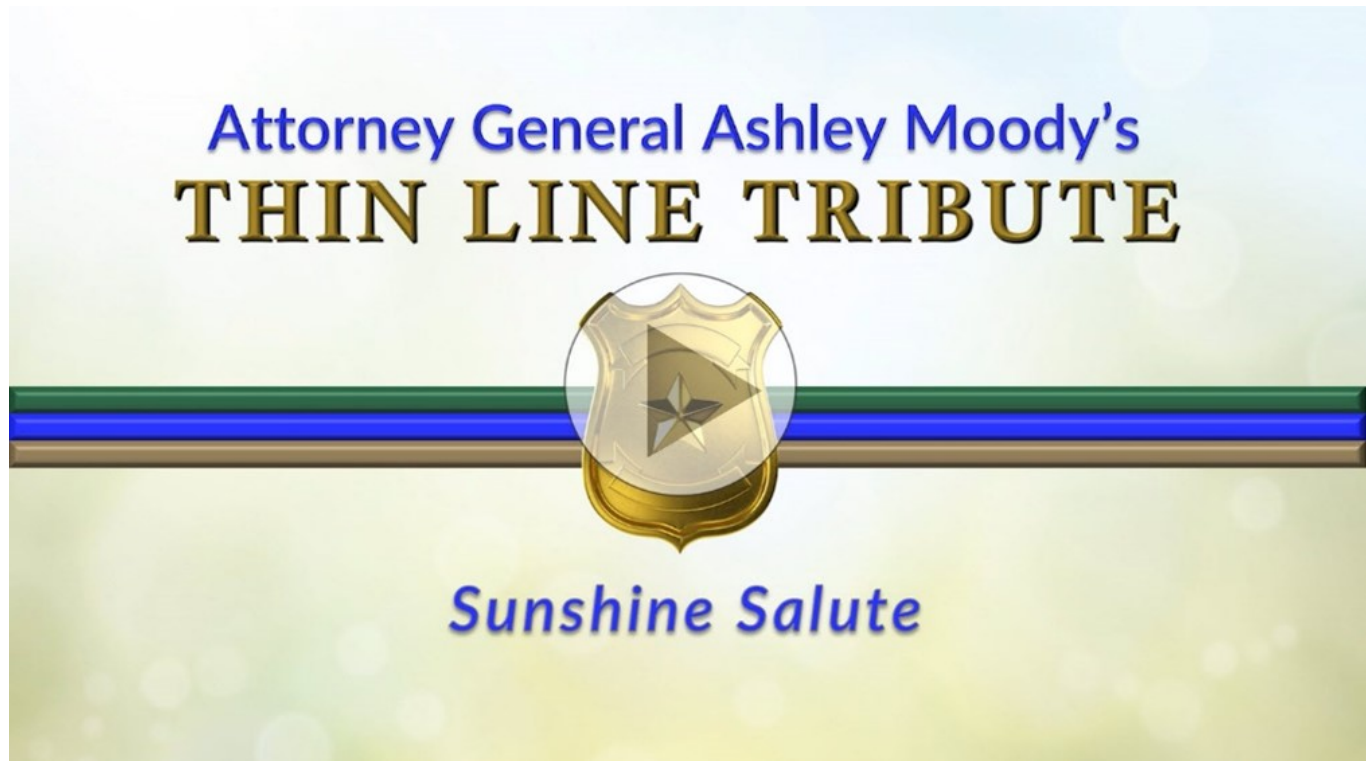
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OFFICE OF THE
ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

To Kick Off National Police Week Attorney General Moody Launches New Program Highlighting Officers Who Moved to Be A Florida Hero



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—In recognition of National Police Week, Attorney General Ashley Moody is kicking off a new Thin Line Tribute series called the Sunshine Salute. The series will focus on out-of-state law enforcement who answered the call to move and become a Florida hero. In the first release of the new series, Attorney General Moody welcomed 30 new recruits receiving their Florida law enforcement credentials at the St. Petersburg College's Southeastern Public Safety Institute. The group of recruits included Officer William Bengochea, who recently moved from Philadelphia after 12 years in law enforcement.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Our new series honors the courage of the hundreds of brave officers who uprooted their families, moved to Florida and are devoting their careers to protecting and serving our citizens. The courage these officers demonstrate is inspiring and the fact that they answered our call to take this bold step proves that Florida is heading in the right direction and deserves our top spot as the most pro-law enforcement state in the nation."

Officer William Bengochea said, “Serving in Philadelphia had changed over the past couple of years, but not for the better. It got to the point where we would have to wait for a robber to make a robbery first instead of simply stopping the criminal beforehand. I just got to the point where I sat down, thought about it, and decided to move here. I had other coworkers in Philly who have also moved down to Florida as well. We are supported here.”

State of Florida Criminal Justice Training Center Directors Association Chairman Jay Romine said, “Florida has shown in the last few years that we’re a very welcoming state for law enforcement. We have seen an increase in the number of officers registering for our programs and our classes across the state are full of agency sponsored recruits and out-of-state officers relocating to Florida. It goes back to Florida’s leaders all being supportive of law enforcement and I think that’s been instrumental in bringing people here.”

Attorney General Moody visited the SPC Southeastern Public Safety Institute’s Equivalency of Training class to welcome new law enforcement recruits to the Sunshine State. Throughout Florida, there are 43 criminal justice training centers that provide equivalency training courses. The equivalency of training process is for out-of-state officers, federal officers, special forces and previously-certified Florida officers who may be exempt from completing the full basic recruit academy. Over the last couple of years, there has been increased participation in Florida’s EOT classes, with most locations reaching maximum capacity or having to add additional classes to fill the demand.

Last year, Gov. Ron DeSantis signed HB 3 into law instituting additional benefits for law enforcement recruits. The new law includes one-time signing bonuses, education resources, relocation assistance and more. Visit BeAFloridaHero.com for more information about these benefits and job opportunities.

Since the creation of the new law enforcement bonuses, Florida’s officer ranks grew by more than 2,000, with more than 500 officers coming from 49 other states and U.S. territories.

Attorney General Moody created the [Be A Florida Hero initiative](#) to showcase career opportunities available at law enforcement agencies across the state and to highlight new benefits for law enforcement officers looking to move to Florida. This resource makes it easier than ever for someone who is interested in becoming a Florida law enforcement officer to learn about the different agencies, search open positions and find contact information to apply for available jobs.

Last summer, Attorney General Moody highlighted the new law enforcement benefits and recruitment tools at the Florida Sheriffs Association Summer Conference, where she recognized Lee County Sheriff’s Office Deputy Raymond Arce, who formerly served in Chicago. To view a highlight of the remarks, click [here](#).

The Sunshine Salute expands upon Attorney General Moody’s Thin Line Tribute program, that recognizes the daily efforts of front-line officers who work to protect Floridians. Attorney General Moody created the Thin Line Tribute to give law enforcement officers the recognition they greatly deserve, but often do not receive.