

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE March 20, 2018 CONTACT: GOVERNOR'S PRESS OFFICE (850) 717-9282 <u>media@eog.myflorida.com</u>

## Gov. Scott, Senate President Negron and House Speaker Corcoran Announce Appointments to the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission

Governor Scott Names Pinellas County Sheriff Bob Gualtieri as Chairman

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – Today, Governor Rick Scott, Senate President Joe Negron and House Speaker Richard Corcoran announced appointments to the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission within the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. Governor Scott also named Pinellas County Sheriff Bob Gualtieri as Chairman. The Commission was established by SB 7026, the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act, signed into law by Governor Scott.

Governor Scott said, "I'm proud to appoint five dedicated Floridians to the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission including fathers of two of the victims who were critical in helping a bill get passed quickly. Since the shooting in Parkland, our number one focus has been to make our schools safer while doing everything possible to ensure a tragedy like this never happens again. I'm confident that these appointees will continue the work that has already started in our state to keep our students safe."

Senate President Joe Negron said, "The Senate appointees include a former classroom teacher and nationally-recognized child advocate, a school board member, a law enforcement officer, a retired school resource officer, and a renowned mental health treatment clinician. This diverse cross-section of professional experience and subject matter expertise, will serve the state well as the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission embarks on the critically important task before it. We can never replace the 17 lives lost, and we can never erase the traumatic experience that lives on in the memories of those who survived this horrific attack. However, this Commission will help ensure we do everything we can to reduce the possibility of a tragedy like this ever happening again."

House Speaker Richard Corcoran said, "I'm honored to appoint five members to the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission. The work and recommendations of this commission will, I believe, serve as a model for the nation in addressing school safety and protecting individual liberty. The appointees to the

commission bring decades of experience in law enforcement, prosecution, and training civilians to handle firearms and protect a school. Most importantly, an appointee, Max Schachter, brings the tragic experience of being a father who lost his son in that day's awful events and who is driven to ensure it never happens to another family ever again. I thank those willing to participate, I commend the courage of the family members who will take on this task, and pray that all the efforts of this commission will meet with success."

## Governor Scott's appointees are as follows:

**Sheriff Larry Ashley**, of Okaloosa, is the Okaloosa County Sheriff. Sheriff Ashley has nearly thirty years of law enforcement experience and has earned numerous awards and commendations during his career. He participated in the Governor's emergency meetings to help develop the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act.

**Superintendent Desmond Blackburn,** Ph.D., of Brevard County is the Superintendent of Brevard Public Schools. He previously served as a teacher, principal, district trainer, director of school improvement, an area superintendent, and as the chief school performance and accountability office for the Broward County School District. Superintendent Blackburn participated in the Governor's emergency meetings to help develop the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act.

**Chief Kevin Lystad**, of Miami Shores, is the Chief of the Miami Shores Police Department. He is the President of the Florida Police Chiefs Association. Chief Lystad will serve as Vice Chair of the Commission.

**Ryan Petty**, of Parkland, is the father of Aliana Petty, who was murdered at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. He played an integral role in ensuring the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act moved through the Florida Legislature.

**Andrew Pollack,** of Parkland, is the father of Meadow Pollack, who was murdered at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Following the shooting, Pollack met with local, state, and federal officials, including Governor Scott, to help create a plan to keep our schools safe.

In addition, Florida Department of Law Enforcement Commissioner Rick Swearingen will serve as a member of the commission, and the following members shall serve as ex officio members:

- Florida Department of Education Commissioner Pam Stewart
- Florida Department of Children and Families Secretary Mike Carroll
- Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Secretary Christina Daly
- Florida Agency for Health Care Administration Secretary Justin Senior

## President Negron's appointees are as follows:

**State Senator Lauren Book,** M.S. Ed, is an internationally respected and renowned child advocate, former classroom teacher and best-selling author. In 2016, she was elected to represent State Senate District 32, which includes portions of Broward County.

**Douglas Dodd** is a member of the Citrus County School Board. He served in the Citrus County Sheriff's Office for over 26 years, retiring as a captain. During his career in law enforcement, Mr. Dodd served as a school resource officer for ten years.

**James Harpring** is the undersheriff for Indian River County and serves as general counsel to the Sheriff's Department. He also works as an adjunct professor at Indian River State College and as an instructor at the Treasure Coast Law Enforcement Academy.

**Melissa Larkin-Skinner**, MA, LMHC, is the Chief Executive Officer at Centerstone Florida. As a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, she has nearly 25 years of experience in mental health and addictions treatment programs including hospital, outpatient, crisis, community based, forensic and child welfare services.

**Marsha Powers** is a member of the Martin County School Board. She was elected to the School Board in 2012 and re-elected subsequently.

## House Speaker Richard Corcoran's appointees are as follows:

**Max Schachter** is the father of Alex Schacter, who was murdered at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Following the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Schachter advocated for school safety improvements and urged members of the Florida Legislature to enact effective legislation.

**Sheriff Grady Judd** is the Sheriff of Polk County. Prior to becoming Sheriff in 2004, Sheriff Judd graduated from the FBI National Academy, as well as several other prestigious law enforcement academies, and taught 23 years at both the University of South Florida and Florida Southern College.

**Sheriff Bob Gualtieri** is the Sheriff of Pinellas County and has served with the Pinellas County Sheriff's office for 35 years. Sheriff Gualtieri also serves on the board of directors for the Florida Sheriff's Association (FSA), the Major County Sheriff's Association (MCSA) and the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Suncoast.

**Chief Asst. State Attorney Mr. Bruce Bartlett** - Serving in the State Attorney's Office for over 22 years, Mr. Bartlett has prosecuted or taken part in the prosecutions of some of Pinellas' most notorious criminals. He has practiced since 1979 and is a graduate of Stetson University College of Law.

**Chief Chris Nelson** currently serves as the Chief of Police for the City of Auburndale, a position he has held since 2012. A graduate of Bartow High School, he started his law enforcement career as a patrol officer with the Bartow Police Department.