

## MIAMI-DADE PD AND COUNTY REACH AGREEMENT



The Miami-Dade police department was recently threatened with layoffs that would have left the department searching for ways to fill in the gaps in patrols that may have meant demotions or other problems for the officers who remained. The reason the layoffs were going to happen was the need to balance the state budget, and the failure to ratify a new contract with the police union. Well, the layoffs have been put on a shelf for now as the Miami-Dade's police union and county administrators have agreed to several of the smaller concessions on the contract. While these first steps are looking good there are still a lot of other issues that need to be dealt with. There are about \$70 million more that needs to be cut from the budget. The county hopes through the negotiations to cut roughly 21 percent of the current police salary and benefits in order to balance the budget. Some of the concessions that were made include the changes to the system around officer promotional exams, drug tests and job descriptions. What kind of concessions are on the list of ones to look at in the future? Well, we don't know all of them, but one of the options includes 10 unpaid furlough days. Though unlike with other government offices, it is hard to imagine how a police department can take a furlough day without causing a spike in crime, since criminals would know that there would be no officers on the street to prevent or arrest offenders. Some of the other ideas proposed by the county were designed to avoid laying off officer or rolling back previously given pay raises. The first of two public negotiations began on Tuesday. On that day there was the first in a set of negotiations that were open to the public at the Miami-Dade County Hall. The first negotiation was packed with supporters of the Miami-Dade police department, as well as supporters of the union itself. Tuesday's meeting will not be the only one. A second public session is set to begin on Friday of this week. The morning session may, or may not, end up with as much a public outpouring as the Tuesday session. The initial deadline set by the Miami-Dade mayor, Carlos Gimenez, for the layoff notices to go out was supposed to be Monday of this week. The notices were set to go out to 90 officers. The initial deadline was held off because of the scheduling of the public negotiations, and a tentative that was reached with the firefighters in the week before these negotiations. People who showed up in support of the police at the negotiations had an array of t-shirts. Many of them were wearing blue union t-shirts with the words, "We Fight What You Fear" written on them. There were also several protestors who showed up with "Occupy Miami" signs. On the whole, if the negotiations go as expected on Friday, and both sides are willing to give, the layoffs could be avoided entirely.

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