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GREED UNLEASHED: Sneaky Politician W. Dale Summerford's Shameless Grab for Taxpayer Dollars

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In a jaw-dropping display of greed, Gadsden County Tax Collector, W. Dale Summerford, has set a new low for political greed. A pension cash bonus of \$470,959, scheduled for December 31, 2023, evidently doesn't satisfy the insatiable appetite of this cunning politician. Summerford, demonstrating a lack of restraint and an unabashed disregard for fiscal responsibility, submitted paperwork on October 27, 2023, petitioning for an additional three years of pension bonus accrual, eyeing a staggering \$529,764 (attached). Link to the attached document.

To add insult to injury, Politician Summerford currently enjoys a salary of \$131,979, accompanied by annual benefits totaling approximately \$52,207—and not paying the standard 3% of his salary (\$3,959) into the Florida Pension program, shifting his financial responsibility onto the shoulders of hardworking taxpayers. Dave Jaye, Researcher at www.tripledippers.org, asks, "Sneaky Politician W. Dale Summerford is greedy. How many gourmet meals, luxury cars, and vacation homes does one person really need?"

While Summerford swims in excess, Gadsden County struggles with a poverty rate of 24.2%, compared to 12.7% statewide <https://www.statista.com/statistics/205451/poverty-rate-in-florida>. The average Gadsden County wage worker, making \$44,042, would have to toil for over 12 years to earn the pension cash bonus that Sneaky Summerford casually pockets. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/gadsden-county-fl>

Following the anticipated taxpayer apid pension bonus windfall of \$529,764, Sneaky Summerford's monthly taxpayer-funded pension will soar to approximately \$10,627, supplemented by a monthly healthcare subsidy of \$225.

Governor DeSantis signed SB 7024, effective July 1, 2023, extended pension bonuses for politicians and bureaucrats by 60%, stretching the period from 5 to 8 years, and to ten years for school employees. This sly maneuver, disguised as fake retirements, will cost taxpayers an additional \$3.1 Billion in the first fiscal year 2023-2024. The legislation further amplifies the taxpayer-paid interest rate from 1.3% to 4% for accruing pension cash bonuses. Giving Politicians and Bureaucrats a paycheck and a pension at the same time to do the same job has led to \$39 Billion in unfunded Florida Retirement obligations, a \$1,725 liability for every man, woman and child in Florida!

<https://thecapitolist.com/frs-double-dip-retirement-expansion-will-make-it-harder-for-private-sector-to-compete-with-state/>

As Floridians grapple with the consequences of these dubious practices, the spotlight remains firmly on Sneaky W. Dale Summerford and his blatant political abuses. We eagerly await the voters' verdict in 2023 on such shameless behavior.

"Triple Dippers," the exclusive club of Florida Public employees who don't contribute 3% of their salary into the Florida retirement system, continue to cheat taxpayers out of \$62.8 Million. No private company would condone such abuses. The statewide list of Florida's Triple Dippers can be found at <https://triplepipers.org/fl-statewide-2023-june-28537-tripledippers/>.

Politician Judge Leigh Hayes, Lee County Circuit, reigns as the December Triple Dipper Queen, enjoying a Pension Cash Bonus of \$690,573 and a salary of \$191,163 simultaneously, without contributing 3% of her salary (\$5,734) into the Florida Retirement System.

Adding to the egregious practices, these Triple Dippers cash out their unused days off at their final highest salary, artificially inflating the final year's pay on which their pensions are calculated. With the ability to collect a paycheck and a pension simultaneously, Triple Dippers can afford to delay Social Security, resulting in an approximate 40% increase in Social Security payments to age 70.

The highest February 2023 fake pension cash bonus payout is a staggering \$819,441 to Alfonso Starling, Corrections Palm Beach Co Sheriff's Department. The average pension cash bonus is \$132,685, with 226 Triple Dippers collecting over \$100,000 in cash bonuses from taxpayers.

The top Florida Politician and Bureaucrats shamelessly collecting pension cash bonuses in December 2023 includes:

	First	Last	Employer	Fake Retirement Date	Pension Cash Bonus Date	Pension Cash Bonus	Monthly Pension based on 5 year bonus	Email Address
1	LEIGH	HAYES	OFFICE OF STATE COURTS	1/1/2019	12/31/2023	\$690,573	\$11,629	wwhlfh7@aol.com
2	SHANE	O BRIEN	MIAMI-DADE CO BD OF CO COMMISSIONERS	1/1/2019	12/31/2023	\$645,055	\$10,826	shaneo2513@com cast.net
3	RANDAL	GREGORY	PALM BEACH COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS	1/1/2019	12/31/2023	\$562,957	\$9,480	onyxx1968@gmail .com
4	FREDERIC K	VAN LOAN	MIAMI-DADE CO BD OF CO COMMISSIONERS	1/1/2019	12/31/2023	\$490,896	\$8,237	fvanloan2020@gm ail.com
5	W. DALE	SUMMERFORD	GADSDEN CO TAX COLLECTOR	1/1/2019	12/31/2023	\$470,959	\$7,931	summerfordd@td s.net

6	KEVIN	RAY	NASSAU CO BD OF CO COMMISSIONERS	1/1/2019	12/31/2023	\$451,561	\$7,577	doc7125@aol.com
7	JAVAN	BEAVERS	MIAMI-DADE CO BD OF CO COMMISSIONERS	1/1/2019	12/31/2023	\$428,067	\$7,183	beav305@yahoo.com
8	CARLOS	GONZALEZ	MIAMI-DADE CO BD OF CO COMMISSIONERS	7/1/2020	12/1/2023	\$427,195	\$10,164	cgal1217@gmail.com
9	PAUL	ELLIS	PALM BEACH CO SHERIFF'S DEPT	1/1/2019	12/31/2023	\$388,677	\$6,522	pellis040@yahoo.com
10	JAMES	HARKINS	OKALOOSA CO TAX COLLECTOR	1/1/2019	12/31/2023	\$365,133	\$6,149	jimboharkins@me.com
11	BRIAN	FLYNN	MANATEE CO SHERIFF'S DEPT	4/1/2019	12/31/2023	\$363,259	\$6,424	npatriot11@aol.com
12	PAUL	ROSS	CITY OF LONGWOOD	1/1/2019	12/31/2023	\$360,771	\$6,053	lpauljross@gmail.com
13	THOMAS	MCSWAIN	HIGHWAY SAFETY & MOTOR VEHICLE	1/1/2019	12/31/2023	\$358,849	\$6,037	thomasrmcswain@comcast.net

Every public employee must sign a contract promise to retire as a condition of participating in the DROP Triple Dippers Program. Will W. Dale Summerford break his contract promise to resign as a condition of receiving a Paycheck and a Pension at the same time to do the same job? A State Law allows Politicians to make a special request (DP-TEOC-2) to break that contract to retire. Politicians have the option to petition the State to collect that pension cash bonus and continue to collect a taxpayer-paid salary and continue not paying 3% of their salary into the Florida Pension system for “the end of my current, consecutively held or succeeding term of office.”

The SW Florida Triple Dippers Politicians and Bureaucrats collecting pension cash bonuses in December 2023 are:

	First	Last	Employer	Fake Retirement Date	Pension Cash Bonus Date	Pension Cash Bonus	Monthly Pension based on 5 year bonus	Email Address
1	LEIGH	HAYES	Politician Judge Lee County	1/1/2019	12/31/2023	\$690,573	\$11,629	wwhlfh7@aol.com
2	BELINDA	SANCHEZ	COLLIER CO SCHOOL BOARD	1/1/2019	12/31/2023	\$309,418	\$5,224	actsbbs@aol.com

3	EDWARD	HILL	CHARLOTTE CO SHERIFF'S DEPT	1/1/2019	12/31/2023	\$251,102	\$4,214	hillbillyed45@yahoo.com
4	ADAM	SEDWICK	LEE CO SHERIFF'S DEPT	3/1/2022	12/23/2023	\$160,709	\$7,240	adamsedwick@aol.com
5	SARAH	LAZENBY	LEE CO SCHOOL BOARD	11/1/2018	12/31/2023	\$149,124	\$2,423	sml2013.sl@gmail.com
6	VALERIE	DAVIS-BINDER	GOVERNOR'S OFFICE	10/1/2020	12/31/2023	\$121,500	\$3,114	vdavisbinder@yahoo.com
7	JOHN	RAMSEY	PEACE RIVER/MANASOTA REG WATER SUPP	7/1/2019	12/31/2023	\$119,813	\$2,231	b1rds@hotmail.com
8	CINDY	PRICE	POLITICAL STAFF STATE SENATE	5/1/2021	12/31/2023	\$107,505	\$3,345	cindyprice20@comcast.net
9	MARIA	KAUFMANN	LEE CO SCHOOL BOARD	1/1/2020	12/15/2023	\$107,455	\$2,247	remeyka27@aol.com
10	NANCY	MESA	COLLIER CO BD OF CO COMMISSIONERS	11/1/2019	12/31/2023	\$101,694	\$2,030	mesanancy@comcast.net
11	KIMBERLY	HEMLER	FLORIDA SOUTHWESTERN STATE COLLEGE	12/1/2020	12/31/2023	\$84,165	\$2,266	kimmie31503@yahoo.com
12	RONALD	RIIS	LEE CO SCHOOL BOARD	5/1/2021	12/31/2023	\$80,684	\$2,511	rriisteach@comcast.net
13	RUSSELL	KOSKI	CHARLOTTE CO SCHOOL BOARD	8/1/2021	12/22/2023	\$77,301	\$2,660	twoeggfarmboys@yahoo.com
14	ROBERTO	LAZO	LEE CO SCHOOL BOARD	1/1/2019	12/31/2023	\$49,448	\$820	robertolazo70@yahoo.com
15	CHERYL	BISHOP	COLLIER CO CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT	4/1/2020	12/1/2023	\$48,165	\$1,063	cherbi6221@yahoo.com
16	ROSEMARY	MROCK	COLLIER CO SCHOOL BOARD	9/1/2020	12/15/2023	\$32,601	\$805	rmmrock@yahoo.com
17	WILLIAM	ROSEBERRY	LEE CO SCHOOL BOARD	2/1/2023	12/31/2023	\$17,214	\$1,546	williamar@leeschools.net

						\$2,508,472		
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Unraveling the Web of Triple Dippers: A Call for Accountability and Redirecting Resources

Every public employee entering the Triple Dippers Program signs a contract pledging to retire as a prerequisite for taking a pension cash bonus. The question now looms over W. Dale Summerford: will he uphold his contractual promise to resign in exchange for simultaneously receiving a paycheck and pension for the same job? A provision within State Law (DP-TEOC-2) allows politicians like Summerford to make a special request, granting them the ability to break their retirement contract. This loophole permits politicians to collect a pension cash bonus while continuing to draw a taxpayer-funded salary and evading the 3% salary contribution into the Florida Pension system during their "current, consecutively held or succeeding term of office."

Advocate Dave Jaye contends, "Instead of padding the pockets of overpaid bureaucrats and politicians, let's channel our tax money to aid the 10,000 people left homeless due to the devastating impacts of Hurricane Ian and Hurricane Nicole's destructive aftermath."

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2079623235780#:~:text=The%20magnitude%20of%20Hurricane%20Ian's,millions%20more%20still%20without%20power>

Approximately 28,573 Florida public employees and politicians are exploiting the Triple Dippers Program, pocketing around \$1 billion in salaries and \$4.63 billion in pension payments while continuing to perform the same job without any genuine retirement. Jaye emphasizes the alarming expansion of the Triple Dippers Program, especially among Florida's State Senate, State House, and Governor's office employees, with 61 Triple Dippers working for the Legislature and 10 for Governor DeSantis. Public Employees in conjunction with their supervisors are perpetrating fraud. There is no retirement, no separation of employment. The Public Manager or Politician simply signs off on the Fake retirement. If the paperwork is in order that's good enough. Even though the public employee and Politician never really left their job".

Jaye calls for an end to this abuse of taxpayer funds, urging the replacement of these "golden oldie" Triple Dippers with fresh, educated talent. He argues that this move would save approximately 40%, around \$902.8 million, and create opportunities for young professionals to build homes and families.

The devastating impact of Hurricane Ian on Florida retirees, as highlighted in Scientific American, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/hurricane-ian-destroyed-retirees-life-savings/> underscores the urgency to halt the financial exploitation of the Triple Dippers Program. Jaye advocates for investing in new talent, citing the potential for reduced healthcare costs, higher education, and increased energy among younger professionals.

With the reality of a \$39 Billion in unfunded Florida Public Employees Liability Jaye recommends increasing all public employee retirement contributions from 3% to 5%, as proposed by former Governor Rick Scott, while urging the elimination of future retirement cash bonuses.

The call for accountability extends to employer contributions. The taxpayer-paid match of DROP Triple Dippers' salary to the Florida pension system has soared to 21.13%, significantly higher than the 16.57% for regular-class employees. In 2012, the employer match for DROP employees was merely 4.33%. Legislative, gubernatorial, and cabinet employer contribution rates stand at a staggering 65.72%. <https://employer.frs.fl.gov/forms/ir23-229.pdf>
<https://fastdemocracy.com/bill-search/fl/2022/bills/FLB00027524/>