

MIAMI BEACH

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee Members

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager

DATE: March 12, 2025

TITLE: DISCUSS/TAKE ACTION – RECLASSIFICATION OF ASSAULT OR BATTERY OFFENSES AGAINST PARK RANGERS TO INCREASE THE POTENTIAL PENALTY FOR DEFENDANTS.

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends expanding Fla. Stat. 784.07 to include Park Rangers, ensuring they receive statewide uniform protections that align with their responsibilities and the risks they face in their roles.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

During the February 3, 2025, City Commission meeting, at the request of Mayor Steven Meiner, the Mayor and City Commission referred a discussion item to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee (“PSNQLC”), to discuss/take action on the reclassification of assault or battery offenses against Park Rangers to increase the potential penalty for defendants. (Exhibit A)

ANALYSIS

The City of Miami Beach presently has 51 funded Park Ranger positions. In addition to enforcing park regulations in City parks, the Park Rangers also serve as visible and recognizable goodwill ambassadors and are often the first to respond to incidents and requests for assistance in the City’s parks and public spaces.

Presently, Florida Statute 784.07 enhances the potential maximum penalty for defendants committing assaults or batteries against law enforcement officers and various other specified personnel including, but not limited to, firefighters, emergency medical care providers, law enforcement explorers, hospital personnel, code inspectors (Fla. Stat. 784.083), parking enforcement specialists, public transit employees, and security officers.

Park Rangers frequently engage in public safety roles, making countless daily contacts with residents and visitors in parks, recreational areas, and public spaces. Unfortunately, these interactions often place them in volatile situations similar to those faced by law enforcement officers, exposing them to risks of assault or battery. Moreover, Miami Beach is not alone in employing Park Rangers—many municipalities across Miami-Dade County and throughout Florida (including, but certainly not limited to, Miami-Dade County, Broward County, Brevard County, Collier County, Hillsborough County, Indian River County, Lee County, Manatee County, Okaloosa County, Palm Beach County, Pasco County, the City of Orlando, the City of Miami, the City of Ocala, the City of Fort Lauderdale, and the City of Gainesville) rely on these professionals for enhanced public safety in their parks and public spaces.

Accordingly, the sponsor would like to discuss and take action in furtherance of the potential expansion of Fla. Stat. 784.07 to include Park Rangers, thereby providing Park Rangers with

uniform protections Statewide that reflect their responsibilities and the risks associated with their duties. In addressing and acting to fill this gap in the statute, the City of Miami Beach can lead the way in advocating for an additional safety measure to benefit Park Rangers and the communities they serve throughout the State.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

Does this Ordinance require a Business Impact Estimate?
(FOR ORDINANCES ONLY)

The Business Impact Estimate (BIE) was published on .
See BIE at: <https://www.miamibeachfl.gov/city-hall/city-clerk/meeting-notice/>

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

N/A

CONCLUSION

The Administration will continue to work with the City Attorney’s Office to provide any supporting documentation and information.

Applicable Area

Citywide

Is this a “Residents Right to Know” item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-17?

No

Is this item related to a G.O. Bond Project?

No

Was this Agenda Item initially requested by a lobbyist which, as defined in Code Sec. 2-481, includes a principal engaged in lobbying? No

If so, specify the name of lobbyist(s) and principal(s):

Department

Parks and Recreation

Sponsor(s)

Mayor Steven Meiner

Co-sponsor(s)

Condensed Title

Discuss/Action, Reclassification of Assault or Battery Offenses Against Park Rangers (Meiner)

