

**Item # 47**

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**MARCH 5, 2019**

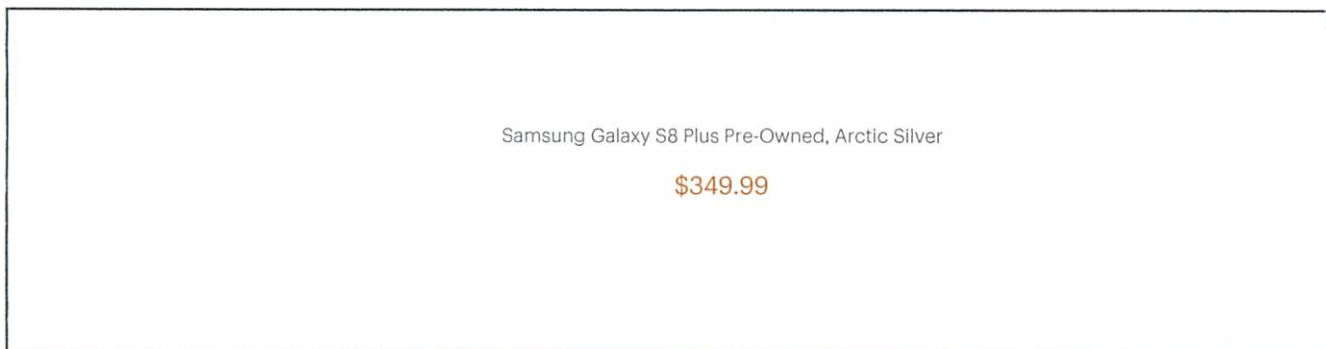
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BROWARD COUNTY

# BSO deputy who froze during Parkland shooting is getting \$8k monthly pension

BY NICHOLAS NEHAMAS

MAY 15, 2018 07:16 PM, UPDATED MAY 16, 2018 07:47 AM



The Broward Sheriff's Office released an unedited of surveillance video outside Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School during and after confessed school shooter Nikolas Cruz killed 17 people on Feb. 14, 2018.

By

Despite resigning in disgrace after the Parkland school shooting, former Broward Sheriff's Office deputy Scot Peterson is receiving a generous state pension that will pay him more than he made in his last year on the force.

Peterson's monthly pension, which began in April, clocks in at \$8,702.35, according to a report from the South Florida Sun Sentinel published Tuesday



evening. That's \$104,428.20 per year in pension payments, compared to the \$101,879.03 he was paid last year, the Sun Sentinel reports.

"The thing he was supposed to do — protect these children — he didn't do," Broward County Commissioner Michael Udine told the Miami Herald Tuesday. "Now he's going to be paid by taxpayers for the rest of his life? It seems disgraceful."

It's possible that Peterson, who is not a union member, could lose his pension if he ends up being convicted of a crime involving a breach of public trust, such as embezzlement or bribery, according to the Sun Sentinel.

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He remains under investigation by BSO's internal affairs division. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement is also investigating the response to the shooting.

Peterson, 55, had served as a highly regarded school resource officer at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland until disturbed former student Nikolas Cruz showed up with an AR-15 rifle on Feb. 14. While Cruz killed 17 students and staff inside a building, Peterson took cover outside, according to surveillance footage and accounts of other law enforcement officers. Although Peterson later said he did not know where the gunfire was coming from, his radio transmissions during the shooting suggest he was aware the slaughter was happening in the school's freshman building.



Scot Peterson appears before a schools-related public hearing sometime before the massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School that led to his resignation after Sheriff Scott Israel criticized his response.

Broward Sheriff Scott Israel held a news conference eight days later to lambast Peterson's conduct and announce the deputy's immediate resignation and retirement.

"I am devastated," Israel said. "Sick to my stomach. He never went in."

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Israel did not respond to a request for comment late Tuesday. Neither did a BSO spokeswoman or Joseph DiRuzzo, an attorney who represented Peterson. The former deputy has not responded to Miami Herald interview requests over the past weeks.

The Florida Department of Management Services confirmed the amount and start date of Peterson's pension late Tuesday night.

In a March 28 letter to BSO and the Broward State Attorney's Office, Erin Rock, the department's secretary, said that neither agency had "provided notice of any charges or other circumstances that would authorize the division to withhold pension benefits from Peterson."

Timothy Donnelly, an assistant state attorney, replied that no action could be taken until FDLE completes its investigation.

Peterson's pension is based on the length of his service and the average of his five highest-earning years, [according to the state pension handbook](#).

Andrew Pollack, the father of slain Stoneman Douglas student [Meadow Pollack](#), took to social media to express his outrage at the amount of money Peterson is receiving.

"[Peterson] hid while my daughter and 16 others were slaughtered!" he [tweeted](#) Tuesday night. "How in the hell is he getting this?"

The coward of broward, Scot Peterson is getting over \$8k a month pension! He hid while my daughter and 16 others were slaughtered! How in the hell is he getting this?

That money should go to actually securing our schools! #FixIt <https://t.co/Zv5zT3IDgP>

— Andrew Pollack (@AndrewPollackFL) May 16, 2018

Pollack [filed a wrongful death lawsuit](#) against the former deputy last month.

Peterson wasn't the only BSO deputy who took cover during Cruz's rampage, [which lasted roughly six minutes and wounded an additional 17 people](#). Coral Springs police officers who also responded to Stoneman Douglas wrote in official reports [that they saw BSO deputies sheltering behind cars](#). At least three BSO deputies arrived in time to hear gunfire, according to their own reports.

An Illinois native, Peterson joined BSO as a detention deputy in 1985.

