



August 18, 2010

Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor
State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1696 – SIGN

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

The Riverside Sheriffs' Association, which represents over 3,200 rank and file deputy sheriffs, deputy probation officers, law enforcement investigators and counselors, coroners and bailiffs – the entire law enforcement team in Riverside County - is pleased to support AB 1696 and asks that it be signed into law.

California law specifies death benefits payable to surviving children of patrol, state peace officer, firefighter, state safety, state industrial, or local safety member of any retirement system. An expanded definition of "child" now includes a step-child living in the home at the time. Benefits were calculated to age 18.

AB 1696 provides an education extension benefit for a dependent child of a deceased firefighter or law enforcement officer until the youngest child reaches 19 years of age, provided he or she is still attending high school. The federal government also provides an exception for situations such as this with respect to dependent children. The Social Security Administration allows a child to continue receiving full benefits until he or she reaches age 19, graduates from high school, or ceases to attend high school on a full time basis.

In the tragic case of an officer's or firefighter's death, we all agree that these families should be provided with as much assistance as possible. The neediest years are those leading to adulthood; they are the education years. We are certain the deceased parent, if he or she had lived, would have done all in their power in these years to make certain their children received the best education possible.

We thank you for your consideration of this measure.

Very truly yours,

Pat McNamara
President

Timothy H. B. Yaryan
Legislative Counsel and Advocate

cc: RSA
Assemblymember Bill Berryhill