



March 12, 2007

Honorable Alex Padillo, Member
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 4032
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 352 – Sponsor and Support

Dear Senator Padilla:

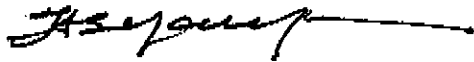
The Riverside Sheriffs' Association, which represents over 2,800 rank and file Deputy Sheriffs, Deputy Probation Officers, Deputy Correctional Officers, District Attorney Investigators, and Deputy Coroners – the entire in Los Angeles County, is pleased to sponsor and support your bill, SB 352.

Current law established in SB 899 provides, notwithstanding the medical treatment utilization schedule, an employee is entitled to no more than 24 chiropractic, 24 occupational therapy, or 24 physical therapy visits per industrial injury. While, in many cases, the "24 Visit Rule" covers many injuries suffered by police officers and firefighters, it fails to address many chronic injuries or injuries when treatment, such as surgery, later proves ineffective. For example, a peace officer or firefighter may have suffered a serious and debilitating injury, has gone through physical therapy and a subsequent surgery. If, after 24 visits, the peace officer or firefighter finds out that the physical therapy/surgery did not resolve the injury, that employee is barred from further treatment under current law.

One of the major goals of SB 899 was to get injured employees back on the job as soon as possible. Cities, counties, and the state spend significant money in recruiting and training its police and fire personnel. Despite this investment, there is a serious shortage of more than 12,000 peace officers statewide, so, for reasons of public safety, it is essential to return trained officers back to work as soon as possible. This bill, exempting peace officers and firefighters from the "24 Visit Rule," removes this limitation for those public safety employees. Because of the nature of their jobs, these employees have the greatest likelihood of injury. SB 352 helps ensure they are effectively treated and can safely return to work.

It is unfair to ask a peace officer or firefighter to risk his or her health in a hazardous profession, and then subsequently deny them benefits if they are injured on the job. This not only puts the affected officer or firefighter at risk, it ultimately endangers the public if the employee, in a crisis, physically fails to perform his/her assigned duty because of the unresolved injury.

Very truly yours,



Timothy H. B. Yaryan
Legislative Counsel and Advocate

cc: Members, Senate Labor and Industrial Relations Committee
Consultants, Senate Labor and Industrial Relations Committee
RSA