



April 11, 2007

Honorable Tom Torlakson, Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 5050
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 352 – Sponsor and Support

Dear Senator Torlakson:

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 law enforcement team in Riverside County - is pleased to sponsor and support 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.

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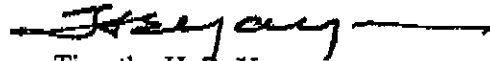
Fiscal Impact: At this point fiscal impact cannot be accurately be determined since SB 899 has only been on the books for a little over two years. Any cost impact will significantly be off-set by increased overtime costs (time and a half) paid to other employees.

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,



Pat McNamara
President



Timothy H. B. Yaryan
Legislative Counsel and Advocate

cc: Consultants, Senate Appropriations Committee
Senator Alex Padilla
RSA