

## Assembly Bill 1537 PORAC Opposition Overview

AB 1537 is built on a false premise. California peace officers are already prohibited by state law from enforcing federal immigration policy. The problem this bill claims to solve does not exist.

### A Solution in Search of a Problem

California already has some of the strongest peace officer conduct laws in the nation.

### Under existing state law:

- California officers are prohibited from enforcing federal immigration law.
- Officers are already subject to strict secondary employment rules that prevent conflicts of interest.
- The conduct AB 1537 is concerned about – local officers acting as immigration agents – is already illegal under California law.

**AB 1537 doesn't fill a legal gap. It manufactures a problem to justify sweeping new restrictions on lawful, off-duty service.**

## What AB 1537 Would Actually Ban

While the bill's stated rationale is restricting local officers from moonlighting as ICE agents, its reach is far broader. It would prohibit California peace officers from:

- Military reserve service: Officers serving in the Coast Guard Reserves, Marine Corps Reserves, Air Force Reserves, or National Guard would be forced to choose between their law enforcement career and their military service.
- FEMA disaster response: Officers who volunteer or contract during California wildfires, floods, and earthquakes would be barred – shrinking our disaster response capacity when we need it most.
- Cybersecurity support: Officers contributing law enforcement expertise to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) would be cut off from protecting critical infrastructure.
- Weapons of mass destruction defense: Officers aiding homeland defense against catastrophic threats through the Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office (CWMD) would be prohibited from that work.
- All of this under threat of decertification – a career-ending penalty normally reserved for corruption or serious misconduct – for lawful off-duty service that has nothing to do with immigration.

## Real Consequences for Real Californians

The officers harmed by this bill are the same ones Californians depend on during emergencies:

- The Coast Guard reservist who rescues mariners in distress.
- The Marine or Air Force reservist called up during a national emergency – who would return home to find their law enforcement career terminated.
- The FEMA-trained officer who deploys after wildfires to help overwhelmed communities recover.
- The cybersecurity-skilled officer supporting CISA in defending hospitals, water systems, and power grids from attack.
- The CWMD-trained officer defending against biological or chemical threats.

These are not abstract scenarios. These are the officers California cannot afford to lose – and AB 1537 gives them no reason to stay.

## Punishing Officers in the Middle of a Staffing Crisis

California is already navigating the worst law enforcement staffing crisis in decades. Morale is strained. Recruitment is down. Retention is fragile. AB 1537 would make all of it worse:

- Strip officers of the right to earn lawful supplemental income and serve their communities off-duty – setting a dangerous precedent for government control of officers' private lives.
- Expose private employment records to public disclosure under CPRA, opening officers, their families, and secondary employers to doxxing, harassment, and retaliation – with no legitimate public benefit.
- Drive experienced officers out of the profession or out of state – at precisely the moment California can least afford to lose them.

## The Bottom Line

California law already prohibits officers from enforcing immigration policy. The problem AB 1537 claims to solve doesn't exist. What does exist is a bill that would ban military reserve service, gut disaster response capacity, weaken cybersecurity and homeland defense, and threaten career-ending decertification for officers whose off-duty service strengthens California's communities.

A "yes" vote on AB 1537 doesn't stop ICE. It stops the officer who supports wildfire recovery on weekends. The reservist defending California's coastline. The cybersecurity expert protecting our infrastructure. It solves a problem that doesn't exist – and creates very real ones.

**PORAC urges your "No" vote on AB 1537.**