



The Honorable Eugene Scalia
Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington D.C. 20210

March 19, 2020

Dear Secretary Scalia,

I write to you today on behalf of the Peace Officers Research Association of California (PORAC), representing 77,000 public safety members in over 930 public safety associations across the state of California. We are the largest public safety statewide organization in the United States. I have a very important matter that needs to be brought to your attention during this unprecedented coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic crisis.

COVID-19 is not only a public health crisis, but is becoming a first responder crisis as peace officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, and hospital personnel contract the virus. Peace officers are on the front-line handling emergency calls, responding to infected or possibly infected people, and enforcing shelter in place orders. Just yesterday, the Governor of California, Gavin Newsom, issued a Stay at Home order (Executive order N-3-20). As the hour's tick by, I continue to hear reports of peace officers and first responders contracting COVID-19. Being on the front line means peace officers have a much higher exposure rate than the average person, and a greater likelihood of contracting the virus.

PORAC is asking the Department of Labor to immediately establish COVID-19 as a presumptive occupational illness to be covered under workers' compensation. PORAC also requests that first responders receive mandatory COVID-19 testing if they show symptoms of the virus or have come in contact with a COVID-19 infected person. Now more than ever, we need the Labor Department to meet this moment and the needs of our first responders. The magnitude of this crisis is extraordinary.

PORAC is committed to ensuring that the brave men and women of law enforcement are safe as they carry out their duties, and those brave men and women are dedicated to serving our communities, even and especially in this time of unprecedented global crisis. Our members, and first responders across California and the nation, stand ready to meet the challenges presented by COVID-19.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at our Sacramento, California PORAC Headquarters (916) 928-3777, or contact our federal advocates in Washington at Steptoe & Johnson LLP (202) 429-6457.

Very Truly Yours,
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