



March 20, 2020

The Honorable Toni G. Atkins
President pro tempore, California Senate
State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear President pro tempore Atkins,

I write to you today on behalf of the Peace Officers Research Association of California (PORAC), representing 75,000 public safety members in over 920 public safety associations across the state of California. I want to thank you for all your efforts in preparing our state as it faces the unprecedented challenges associated with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

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 or stay at home orders. As the hour's tick by, I continue to hear reports of peace officers and first responders contracting COVID-19. Just in Detroit, five police officers have tested positive for COVID-19 and 152 are under quarantine. With numbers like that, California could see entire police departments close if a similar situation happened here. 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 that you do everything in your power to increase the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) available to our states first responders, including n95 masks, hand sanitizer, and nitrile gloves.

PORAC also requests to immediately establish COVID-19 as a presumptive occupational illness to be covered under workers' compensation. In addition, PORAC requests that first responders receive expedited COVID-19 testing if they show symptoms of the virus or have come in contact with a COVID-19 infected person. It doesn't make sense that individual public safety associations should have to meet and confer to facilitate this. California could easily replicate what Seattle has done by creating testing sites dedicated to first responders. Now more than ever, we need our elected leaders to meet this moment and the needs of our first responder professionals. The magnitude of this crisis is extraordinary. Lastly, if a vaccine or other medical protocol that mitigates the effect of COVID-19 becomes available, peace officers and first responders should be among the first to receive it.

Brian R. Marvel
President

Damon Kurtz
Vice President

Tim Davis
Treasurer

Randy Beintema
Secretary



With the right tools and equipment in place, our elected leaders and the citizens of our great state can have the full confidence that law enforcement and our first responder partners will rise to the occasion and exceed expectations, ensuring our communities are supported during this health crisis.

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 stand ready to meet the challenges presented by COVID-19.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at the PORAC Headquarters (916) 928-3777 or contact our advocates at Aaron Read & Associates (916) 448-3444.

Very Truly Yours,
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
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