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Contact:
Ian Anderson
(818)268-6488

IAnderson@FionaHuttonAssoc.com

California Law Enforcement Unites to Call for a Collaborative, Holistic Approach to Public Safety Legislation

SB 731 and SB 776 Need More Time to be Vetted, Researched and Amended to Ensure the Best Outcome for Californians

Sacramento, CA – Today, the Peace Officers Research Association of California (PORAC), California Police Chiefs Association (Cal Chiefs) and California Association of Highway Patrolmen (CAHP) have come together to voice concerns about SB 731 (Bradford) and SB 776 (Skinner). Together, these organizations represent the voices of more than 80,000 officers and more than 930 public safety associations through the state.

California law enforcement remains committed to delivering proactive, meaningful reforms to the practice of community policing that will help restore trust in law enforcement, improve public safety outcomes and place officers in a better position to serve our communities. We proactively put forward our recommendations in comprehensive reports, including the [PORAC Policy Platform](#) and [Cal Chief's Platform: CA Leading the Way](#).

Eager to capitalize on the energy of this moment and the incredible media scrutiny of law enforcement to deliver a "win" for their constituents, many of our state's legislators rapidly introduced more than two dozen bills in these last few months of a truncated legislative session. All of which were aimed at fundamentally changing the practice of law enforcement in California. Many of those bills are poised to become law, and California's law enforcement community looks forward to working together with our elected leaders to ensure those new laws are implemented effectively, including:

- [AB 1506 \(McCarty\)](#): Will require the Attorney General to investigate all officer involved shootings resulting in the death of unarmed individuals.
- [AB 846 \(Irwin/Burke\)](#): Requires refining the inclusion of implicit and explicit bias into peace officer psychological evaluations.
- [AB 1196 \(Gipson\)](#): Bans the use of the carotid restraint.

Recognizing that public safety laws are incredibly complex and merit far greater attention than the legislature can possibly devote before session ends, many bill authors responsibly decided to hold back their legislation to allow greater time for vetting, research and analysis.

Of the remaining bills seeking to change the practice of law enforcement, our organizations agree in principle with what SB 731 and SB 776 are seeking to accomplish. Unfortunately, these two proposed bills were crafted virtually overnight and in silos – and would have unknown impacts to public safety, some of which could place both officers and members of the public in real danger. With only a few short days left in this legislative session, time is running out to ensure we fully understand how these bills will impact the safety of our families, communities and officers. Californians deserve better than this rushed

and haphazard approach to an issue so fundamental to our daily lives as public safety. We continue to offer to work with each bill author to find a solution that will achieve the best outcome for all Californians. Until then, PORAC, Cal Chiefs and CAHP urge our elected leaders to oppose these bills as written.

Our organizations respectfully submit the following concerns about SB 731 and SB 776 from California's men and women in law enforcement:

[SB 731 \(Bradford\):](#)

- *Removes qualified immunity protection for all public employees and employers*, a legal protection afforded to all public servants that is designed to protect the innocent – all but the plainly incompetent or those who knowingly violate the law. Because of its far-reaching and unknown impacts, city and county governments have also voiced opposition to this proposal.
- *Establishes a new oversight commission of members whose qualifications are inherently based on negative encounters with peace officers* — vesting the Board with complete investigatory authority to overturn local agency and District Attorney recommendations and discipline.

“We absolutely support changing the licensing protocol and establishing a process to ensure we have only the best working as officers,” **said Cal Chiefs President Eric Nuñez**. “However, if we expect our peace officers to continually place themselves in harm’s way to protect our families and communities, they must operate with the peace of mind that as long as they are reasonably acting within the law, they will not be penalized for performing their duties.”

[SB 776 \(Skinner\):](#)

- *Includes extremely vague and overly broad language that will cost millions* – requires the release of thousands and thousands of files, even for the most minor events without complaints, creates new financial penalties for cities up to \$1000 per day, and requires the retention of files for 30 years.
- *Would require the public disclosure of non-sustained complaints against officers* – publicly shaming and potentially ruining an innocent officer’s life.

“Peace officers should not have to defend themselves with the public, or with their family and friends, if the investigation has already shown that they did their jobs correctly,” **said CAHP President Rick LaBeske**. “People are innocent until proven guilty in this country, and that includes peace officers. We would ask that only sustained complaints be released.”

“We completely understand and share the desire of our elected officials to improve community policing practices to better serve our communities, but there is still much work that needs to be done,” **said PORAC President Brian Marvel**. “As our state legislators move these bills through the legislative process, and as the ongoing dialogue about public safety reform continues, our overarching message to them is simple – tell us what you want from law enforcement, and then let’s work together to find common ground that keeps our communities and peace officers safe. We’re here to serve you.”

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