



May 22, 2023

The Honorable Senator Dave Cortese
Chair, Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 6630
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1020 (Grayson) County Employees Retirement Law of 1937: disability retirement: medical conditions: employment-related presumption – OPPOSE

Dear Senator Cortese:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the Urban Counties of California (UCC), and the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), we write in respectful opposition to AB 1020 (Grayson), which would change the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 by expanding the scope of medical conditions and employment-related presumptions for a disability retirement for firefighters, members in active law enforcement, and public safety members who have completed five years or more of service and that arise out of and in the course of employment.

We recognize that firefighters, members in active law enforcement, and public safety members serve our state with distinction in some of the most difficult circumstances imaginable. Some of these workers suffer from injuries related to their work that warrant access to the workers' compensation system. We believe these employees are currently provided with fair access to the workers' compensation system for injuries, and therefore, AB 1020 is unnecessary. We reject the unproven assertion that a presumption is needed for these workers to fairly access benefits. In addition, we are not aware of any objective analysis that substantiates a need for the massive expansion of applicability for presumptions, as proposed by AB 1020.

California law provides that injuries are covered by workers' compensation if the injury is suffered during the course and scope of employment. Accordingly, injuries are covered if the employee is at work engaged in any work-related activity. Injured workers can file a claim providing details of their injury for the purposes of determining whether their injury meets the latter requirements. If there is a dispute over the facts of an injury, the decision is rendered by an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) at the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board. The ALJ is already required by law to liberally construe California law with the purpose of extending their benefits for the protection of persons injured in the course of their employment.

We anticipate that AB 1020 would add considerable new costs for public employers at a time when budgets are facing significant headwinds. While the state is experiencing a revenue shortfall after gains that have exceeded expectations and historical precedent year after year, per capita revenues for some local governments have never recovered from the Great

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Recession of 2007 to 2009, in real dollars. Regretfully, this means that any increase in costs as a result of AB 1020 may impact funding for the critical services provided by local governments, ranging from law enforcement and emergency service responses to behavioral health services, libraries, and agricultural services, to name just a few.

For the aforementioned reasons, we respectfully urge your "No" vote on AB 1020. Should you have any questions about our position, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,



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cc: Assemblymember Tim Grayson, 15th Assembly District
Members and Staff, Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement Committee
Scott Seekatz, Senate Republican Caucus