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California State Senate

SENATOR
RODERICK D. WRIGHT
TWENTY-FIFTH SENATE DISTRICT



GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
CHAIR

BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE #4
ON STATE ADMINISTRATION,
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PREPAREDNESS
JOINT COMMITTEE ON RULES

June 11, 2012

Hon. Patrick O'Donnell
Chairman, State Legislation Committee
City of Long Beach
333 W. Ocean Boulevard, 14th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802

Re: Item 12-0467

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As the 25th Senate District touches five of the nine Council districts, it's been my honor to work closely with Council and staff in attaining in Sacramento that which best serves the people and interests of the City of Long Beach.

I write on **Item 12-0467** before your **STATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE** today. Materials posted for this item list as the suggested recommendation "to receive and file a staff report and Committee discussion of Assembly Bill 678 (Pan) and forward discussion as appropriate to the City Council." As your posting included no text backup of a staff report, the comments I offer are general and supportive of the measure which lawmakers adopted unanimously last year to provide a "net gain" to local fire department budgets.

As you well know, the onus to transport to hospitals our most vulnerable residents falls to the state and to local governments, in the form of Medi-Cal beneficiaries being carried by ambulance, increasingly by first response units, like local fire. Ambulance transports have increased statewide 13% from 1997 to 2006. Ambulance transports of Medi-Cal patients have risen 19% from 2006 to 2009. Roughly a tenth of all ambulance patients this year are expected to be Medi-Cal beneficiaries, and half of those are likely to be transported by local fire units. These increases – coupled with cuts in the Medicare rate – strain fire departments' budgets and stretch personnel.

While I do not know the direction of staff, as no report was provided with the item, I would suggest that your discussion view AB 678 as a bipartisan effort by lawmakers to bring relief to local fire departments. Unanimous passage of AB 678 allowed the state to reach out for a pool of federal dollars that gave a *fifty-percent match* of unreimbursed expenses to local agencies who provide Medi-Cal ground emergency medical transportation services. Lawmakers passed this bill unanimously so that these federal dollars would not be left on the table and could therefore help restore personnel staffing levels. I cast my vote thus to support the very departments we've called upon increasingly to transport our most vulnerable residents to hospital.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roderick D. Wright".

RODERICK D. WRIGHT
Senator, 25th District

RDW/wro:cdi