

LONG BEACH FIRE FIGHTERS



August 13, 2019

Mayor Robert Garcia
411 W. Ocean Boulevard
Long Beach, CA 90802

Dear Honorable Mayor Robert Garcia,

On behalf of the nearly 400 members of the Long Beach Firefighters, Local 372 I am proud to support the "Strategies to Improve Diversity in the Fire Department, R-33." I have had many conversations with members of the city council for years on how we can improve our diversity in the Long Beach Fire Department (LBFD). This is the first time an investment has been suggested to achieve the goal of increasing diversity in the LBFD.

Working with our partners in the Long Beach Unified School District; Long Beach Community College district, California State University of Long Beach, Long Beach Fire Department, and Long Beach Firefighters Local 372 I know we will be successful in bringing diversity to our workforce. It has been my opinion through the years of conversations regarding increasing the diversity in our workforce that the key component missing has been investment into achieving the goal. If we are going to be serious about increasing diversity in our workforce, then we need to invest in that endeavor.

It is also important to remember that this is a long-term project and it will take years to achieve the goal. Simply, flipping the switch and developing a program and plan will not remedy the issue in a single year. We need to have short- and long-term goals established and discuss what success looks like in the future as we begin this process. We can't expect to fix this issue in a single year. However, we will be able to see positive results and impacts we make in investing in bringing diversity to the LBFD. Those positive results need to be accounted for and reported to City Council so you can see your return on investment.

While this will be a first for the LBFD, investing in creating diversity in the fire service is not a new topic. Many of our surrounding agencies have made impacts in creating diversity in their fire department. I have spoken with Fire Chief Espino and he has a strong plan to increase diversity in the LBFD which correlate with this item. However, Fire Chief Espino needs the investment to bring forward his plan. Local 372 supports investing in creating a more diverse LBFD.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rex Pritchard'.

Rex Pritchard, President
Long Beach Firefighters, Local 372

CC: City Councilmembers
Pat West