

Greetings everyone! Hope this message finds you well. October is here and we are looking forward to fall bringing cooler temperatures and hopefully fires put out.

The Labor Day holiday is customarily the last official weekend of summer and traditionally the final weekend for our boating unit. However, this year- the weekend began with a raging wildfire that's now the largest in California history.

The Creek Fire was sparked in Fresno County and to date the cause remains under investigation. The blaze instantly sent many of our patrol deputies and detectives into lifesaving mode. Our teams were mobilized to help with everything from evacuations, to road and campground closures, residential patrols in order to prevent looting.

The weekend was especially frightening for more than 200 adults and children visiting Mammoth Pools in Madera County. A fun weekend nearly turned deadly- and a request for mutual aid deployed the National Guard to airlift mass crowds out of a circle of flames.

Thank you to all of you who rushed up to the Shaver Lake area to immediately work 12 plus hour shifts. Your work has been commended by mountain residents, other agencies and local political leaders. The duration has been exhausting and I am grateful for the wonderful compassionate service you have provided to the community. It's during disasters like that- where Fresno County residents really rely on us to help them navigate what's a very difficult time for them. It's been hard seeing the tears, heartbreaking loss of homes and then having to tell residents they must still remain evacuated until it's safe and the infrastructure is in place for them to safely survey and digest the damage.

Remembering Deputy Jose Mora

September marked a very hard one for our agency. On Monday evening- following Labor Day weekend- we lost our friend and beloved co-worker Jose Mora. He died of COVID-19 complications on September 7th. Jose was a member of this agency for 16 years and served a total of 20 years in law enforcement. He came to the Fresno County Sheriff's Office in 2004 from Firebaugh PD. His wife Caroline, along with his three children will feel the profound void the most. We are continuing to pray for them during the difficult months ahead.

Those who knew Jose, will remember him as a dedicated detective and loyal friend. I would like to especially thank Adam Maldonado, who served as the liaison to the Mora family. Adam did a tremendous job as a conduit between the Mora family and our agency. As a longtime friend of Jose's- I know it wasn't easy for him personally- yet he poured his heart into helping his fallen friend's family. He worked tirelessly for the family to ensure the funeral was perfectly planned and carried out. For those of you who helped during the memorial service- please know the Mora family is forever grateful. The work you all did to help memorialize Jose's life will always be appreciated by his loved ones and never forgotten by his family and co-workers.

Area Two Substation Groundbreaking

After years of planning, the work is finally underway to build a brand new Area Two Substation! It's taken about six years of planning and saving money to purchase the land and design/build the substation. The substation, located at Armstrong and Olive, will occupy six acres of land

with a 22,000 square foot office building. In addition, it will have a 35,000 square foot storage bay for equipment. It will include plenty of parking and a substantial area for future growth. Sheriff's office personnel will have a secure parking and entrance area. Depending on weather conditions, it should be completed by the summer of 2021. Thank you to Fresno County Public works who will be working with Klassen Construction on the project.

Insurance Trust

Since 1997, the FDSA/FSSA Insurance and Benefits Trust has used Blue Shield of California as its insurance carrier. The relationship has been longstanding with some ups and downs. There were years we had no rate increase, some years where we had rate decreases, and others where we experienced rate increases. Due to the Affordable Healthcare Act, initiated by former President Obama- all private insurance plans had increases to their health premiums. This AHA used private insurance participants, to fund the act which required everyone to have health insurance living in the US. By signing this into law, this gave all of us an uncontrolled tax increase for three years once the program was started. To our Insurance Trust, this amounted to roughly a 17% indefinite increase.

Our insurance plan is under and ERISA Trust. Meaning, we are not self-funded, but we operate under what the ERISA Trust document states.

Our health insurance rates come primarily from usage by its members. We negotiate rates with the carriers and also contributions from Fresno County for active employees.

The middle of 2019 and most of 2020 has turned out to be challenging for usage under our plan. Normally- we see percentages of usage no higher than 85-90%. This means carriers are still making 10-15% from us. Anything lower is more money for the carriers. However- it also provides us with a less risk rating, which makes our group more desirable for a better renewal year.

The high claims- during part of 2019 and 2020 were well over 100%. Two months were actually over 200%, meaning Blue Shield is not making any money. In fact, they are having to pay over and above to make sure bills are paid on their end. Based on our recent trend, it was apparent the renewal of our benefits would be a challenge.

Our current situation is figuring out how much we can offset the less than ideal rating.

Blue Shield offered a renewal of 24% to the total plan. No matter the benefit level you receive-it would be substantial out-of-pocket money increase to you. There's no way to get around that cost at this time.

Therefore, the Insurance Trust directed our insurance broker, DiBuduo and DeFendis to shop other carriers. This essentially means moving our insurance away from Blue Shield.

The Trust asked for quotes providing the same benefit level, changing nothing. In addition- we asked for a fixed plan for retirees, to give them a more cost-effective option.

During the entire month of September- each insurance carrier bid on our contract. Blue Shield would not budge until the last minute, dropping down the renewal to 21.4%. This is just a non-starter for us.

After several meetings with two other carriers, your Insurance Trust has chosen to move our plan to Anthem Blue Cross for all of its members and their families.

I will be putting out more information on rates in the next newsletter, along with how they will impact each of you. The information will also be posted to our website in the Members Only, benefits section. Open enrollment is scheduled to start November 2, 2020.

Overall, the plan has risen 7 percent overall with the increase based on rates from Anthem Blue Cross. Please remember, our rates are directly based on experience and risk. This formulation dictates which direction either a rate increase or rate decrease has to the plan. In deciding what will work best for you and your family- please consider the annual cost and what is more suitable for you in terms of a PPO or HMO.

Police Reform Bills hit a snag at the State Capital

I have attached the written by Alexi Koseff from the San Francisco Chronicle. This article was on the front page of the Chronicle and sent to me by Oakland POA President, Barry Donalee. The quote sums up what the true agenda was in Sacramento by some of the far left. It puts together the bills that were defeated in Sacramento, aimed at total police reform without discussion. You may not like the article or the quotes from the anti-police activist Cat Brooks (above) but much of it is accurate. Smartly, PORAC President Brian Marvel and nobody else on the PORAC Executive Committee provided a quote for the article. A quote, given our success, would come off as nothing more than bragging. PORAC's pragmatic and professional stance has served us well and continuing on that course works.

Our successful campaign, in such a difficult environment, was based on three factors; Teamwork, Hard work, & Pragmatism. The team at Aaron Reed (Aaron & Randy), with Brian at the helm, and various PORAC association leaders around the state was a winner.

On SB 629 for example, Redwood Chapter Director Gary Frace (Lake County DSA) tried to meet with the bill's author to get him off his crazy agenda and craft a compromise. That Senator wouldn't even meet Gary. Now, his bills is dead and in the next session I suspect he will be more amenable to sitting down with Gary or anyone else from PORAC.

Bills to reform police get hung up

Activists hoped for more than ‘tinkering’

By Alexei Koseff



Yalonda M. James / The Chronicle

Shan'a Mason of San Leandro hugs her children, Aamina Mason and Assata Mitchell, on June 4 after a downtown Oakland protest of the Minneapolis police killing of George Floyd.

SACRAMENTO — California will ban certain police choke holds and establish independent investigations for some law enforcement shootings under legislation Gov. Gavin Newsom signed Wednesday — the remnants of what activists once hoped would be a far more ambitious overhaul of policing practices.

Although Newsom hailed several measures he signed as long overdue in California, activists who pushed lawmakers to consider much more

following the police killing of George Floyd were frustrated that their biggest priorities fell short at the Capitol.

“I’m shocked, actually. Maybe arrogantly so, or naively so,” said Cat Brooks, co-founder of the Anti Police-Terror Project in Oakland. She said many of the proposals that failed were “no-brainers,” given the groundswell of protests against police brutality and racism.

“We’re tinkering around the edges,” Brooks said. “We had an opportunity to make transformative and substantive change, and I feel like a lot of our lawmakers here in Sacramento ignored us.”

Legislators introduced a flurry of measures this summer after Floyd, a Black man, was killed in May when a white Minneapolis police officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes. Activists hoped the national outcry would propel change in California, which, despite its liberal reputation, has historically been deferential to law enforcement and passed some of the strongest protections for officers in the country.

But the most far-reaching bills snagged on opposition from police groups, which expressed general approval for some of the ideas but urged lawmakers to delay action during the pandemic-shortened session

and wait until next year, when there would be more time to deal with their objections.

Representatives for the California Police Chiefs Association and the Police Officers Research Association of California, a statewide federation of police unions, declined to comment Wednesday.

A bill to strip the badges from police officers who break the law and eliminate their legal immunity for killing a suspect ultimately died in the Legislature without ever getting a vote. Lawmakers also shelved a bill prompted by Floyd's death that would have required police officers to intervene when their colleagues use excessive force. The clock ran out on measures to make more police records public and limit use of tear gas and rubber bullets at protests.

"None of these bills are easy," Newsom said Wednesday at a virtual signing ceremony where he promised that legislative efforts would continue next year. "They may appear to be easy on the outside. So many constituencies, so many nuances, a lot of folks pushing back."

The governor signed four bills that will change policing practices in California:

AB1196 by Assemblyman Mike Gipson, D-Carson (Los Angeles County), which bans the use of choke holds that apply pressure to a person's windpipe, as well as a technique known as a carotid restraint, in which an officer applies pressure to the sides of a person's neck to cut off blood flow and quickly knock them unconscious. Newsom ordered the state this summer to stop teaching the hold in its police training programs, and some law enforcement agencies, including the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office and the Santa Rosa Police Department, have already stopped the practice. The San Francisco Police Commission prohibited carotid restraints in 2016.

AB1506 by Assemblyman Kevin McCarty, D-Sacramento, which requires the state attorney general to investigate any incident in which a law enforcement officer kills an unarmed civilian. It was McCarty's third attempt in five years to move investigations of police shootings out of the hands of local prosecutors, who critics argue are not well equipped to handle them because of their close relationships with law enforcement agencies. Previous efforts faced opposition from Attorney General Xavier Becerra and his predecessor, Kamala Harris, who have been reluctant to intervene in what they consider to be local investigations.

AB1185 by McCarty, which allows counties to create oversight boards that can investigate their sheriff's departments.

AB846 by Assemblywoman Autumn Burke, D-Marina del Rey (Los Angeles County), which requires that evaluations of prospective officers include a screening for biases based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion, disability and sexual orientation. It also requires departments to rewrite their job descriptions to emphasize community interaction over "paramilitary aspects of the job."

Newsom vetoed four other policing measures:

AB1299 by Assemblyman Rudy Salas, D-Bakersfield, which would have required law enforcement agencies to complete misconduct investigations when an officer was fired or left in the middle of the probe and report the results to the state. Newsom said in his veto message that the bill did not go far enough and could "slow momentum for broader decertification measures in future legislative sessions."

AB2054 by Assemblywoman Sydney Kamlager, D-Los Angeles, which would have established a pilot program for community groups to respond to mental health crises, domestic violence and other situations

instead of law enforcement. Newsom said in his veto message that the “underlying goal of this legislation is important,” but should be done through the budget process.

SB629 by Sen. Mike McGuire, D-Healdsburg, which would have allowed media members to report from areas that police close during a protest and prohibited officers from arresting reporters for failing to disperse. The bill defined journalists too broadly, Newsom said in his veto message, and “could include those individuals who may pose a security risk — such as white nationalists, extreme anarchists or other fringe groups with an online presence.”

SB1220 by Sen. Tom Umberg, D-Santa Ana, which would have required law enforcement agencies to maintain a list of officers who have been convicted of crimes or misconduct in the previous five years and provide it to prosecutors. Newsom cited the cost of the mandate in his veto message.

Marc Philpart, managing director for PolicyLink, an advocacy group for racial and economic equality, said it was a “disheartening” year for legislative efforts to overhaul policing. He said lawmakers remain too beholden to the donations and political influence of law enforcement groups.

“The everyday crisis that is the extermination of Black people and people of color is just going unchecked,” Philpart said. “What are lawmakers waiting for? They haven’t communicated that to us.”

After the Legislature’s session ended in August, Senate President Pro Tem Toni Atkins, D-San Diego, affirmed her commitment to working on the decertification bill next year. Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, D-Lakewood (Los Angeles County), created a committee to develop “meaningful changes to policing in California.” But activists expressed little optimism that legislators would put forward reforms needed to fix what they say is a broken system of policing.

“The reality is we’ve given you a chance. We’ve done training. We’ve done body cameras,” Brooks said. “If you ain’t got it right yet, you ain’t going to get it right.”

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During these unusual times and under difficult circumstances- I want to again thank you for all of the work you are doing. I know so many of you are working extra shifts and long hours during a pandemic. And now the recent disaster zone has added an additional challenge.

There's an 18th century quote by writer John Berridge that seems so fitting at this time.

"Bravery is not the absence of fear, but action in the face of fear."

Thank you all for being strong and steadfast.

All my best,

Eric