

CALIFORNIANS FOR EMERGENCY AMBULANCE EMPLOYEE SAFETY & PREPAREDNESS ACT

POSITION: The Chamber's Public Policy voted to SUPPORT the Initiative on May 8, 2018.

RATIONALE: The initiative creates clarity around a recent legal decision that was extended to apply to emergency medical personnel that would negatively impact the industry by significantly increasing the cost of operation in California.

STATUS: The initiative is currently gathering signatures that must be submitted by June 27, 2018 to appear on the November statewide ballot.

SUMMARY

The Emergency Ambulance Employee Safety and Preparedness Act (Act) is an initiative that establishes into law the longstanding industry practice of requiring emergency medical technicians (EMTs), paramedics and life flight helicopter crews and 911 dispatchers to remain reachable during their breaks, and further states that they will be paid for remaining on call. It also outlines that when breaks are missed and cannot be made up during a work shift, that the professionals be paid accordingly.

INDUSTRIES IMPACTED

The Act will impact ambulatory services, and other industries affiliated with emergency response.

SUPPORTERS

American Medical Response

OPPONENTS

None reported.

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR

The Act is critical to ensuring that paramedics and emergency medical professionals can respond as quickly as possible to calls. The LAO's office stated that the "initiative would result in net savings to local governments in the tens of millions of dollars annually that result from lower ambulance provider net costs reflected in agency contracts."

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION

Labor standards for emergency medical professionals should match those of private security personnel.

MORE INFORMATION

A 2016 Augustus v. ABM Security Services decision rules that private security guard employers must relieve their employees of all duties and they must be unreachable- even in the event of an emergency- during their rest breaks. Following that decision, the California Department of Industrial Relations published the decision and is attempting to broadly apply it to all industries. As a result, employees such as paramedics cannot monitor radios, cell phones, pagers during rest breaks and challenges the emergency response systems relied upon within the community.

In California, approximately 75% of the state's emergency 911 calls are responded to by private ambulance crews. Requiring those crews to be unreachable during rest breaks would mean that even if they are within a block of an emergency, they would not be able to be notified of, or respond to, said emergency. As a result, wait times could increase and life-or-death assistance could be postponed.