

CALIFORNIA STATEWIDE LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSOCIATION

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3/24/2015

Association of Criminalists-DOJ

Association of Conservationist
Employees

Association of California Wildlife
Officers

Association of Deputy
Commissioners

Association of Motor Carrier
Specialists

Association of Motor Vehicle
Investigators of California

Association of Special Agents-DOJ

California Alcohol Beverage Control
Agents

California Association of Criminal
Investigators

California Association of Food &
Drug Investigators

California Association of Fraud
Investigators

California Association of Law
Enforcement Employees

California Association of Regulatory
Investigators & Inspectors

CHP Public Safety Dispatchers
Association

California Organization of Licensing

Fire Marshal Emergency Services
Association

Hospital Police Association of
California

State Park Peace Officers
Association of California

Senator Umberg
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 7510
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 447 – Support

Dear Senator Umberg,

On behalf of California Statewide Law Enforcement Association, I am writing in strong support of SB 447. In California, minor dependents of peace officers and firefighters who are killed in the line of duty are eligible to receive employer-provided health benefits until they reach the age of 21. This age limit was originally set to align with the former federal standard for dependent coverage under health insurance plans. However, with the passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2010, the federal age limit was increased to 26. Unfortunately, California law has not been updated to reflect this change and continues to cap benefits at age 21.

While many public employers honor the ACA's age limit of 26, there is currently no guarantee in California law that ensures these minor dependents will retain health coverage beyond age 21. As a result, it remains a very real possibility that the children of our fallen heroes could lose vital health benefits at a time when they may still be financially vulnerable.

Extending health benefits to age 26 for the dependents of peace officers and firefighters who paid the ultimate sacrifice is a small but profoundly meaningful step. It brings California law into alignment with federal standards and acknowledges the additional hardships these young adults may face. Many are navigating the challenges of early adulthood without the support of a parent, and they deserve the same health coverage opportunities afforded to others under the ACA.

SB 447 ensures that minor dependents of fallen peace officers and firefighters can continue receiving health benefits under the surviving spouse's coverage—or, if there is no surviving spouse, under their own coverage—until the age of 26. Our cities, counties, and state owe it to these families, who have given so much to protect our communities.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge your “aye” vote on SB 447.

Sincerely,

Alan Wayne Barcelona
Special Agent, DOJ
President, CSLEA