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MEMORANDUM

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**To:** City of Beaumont  
**From:** Townsend Public Affairs  
**Date:** December 11, 2020  
**Subject:** Legislative Update for the City of Beaumont

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**State Legislative Update**

On Monday, December 7, the Assembly and Senate officially convened the 2021-22 Legislative Session. The organizational session provided each House the opportunity to swear members into office, as well as adopt the Rules of the House, and elect the Assembly Speaker and Senate President Pro Tem for the upcoming session. As expected, Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon and Senate President Pro Tem Toni Atkins were selected to continue as leaders of their respective Houses.

While the business of the organizational session was the same as in previous sessions, the circumstances under which the sessions were held was a dramatic departure from the norm. In order to protect public health, and maintain proper social distancing, the Assembly did not conduct their session in the State Capitol, but instead met at the Golden One Center, which is several blocks away from the Capitol. The Senate, on the other hand, did meet in the State Capitol, but several members elected not to travel to the Capitol and instead were sworn in to office over Zoom, or will be sworn in to office in the coming days.

This session was the official beginning of the 2021-22 Regular Session of the Legislature; however, after once adjourned, the Legislature will be on recess until they reconvene after the holidays, on January 4<sup>th</sup>. During the meantime, the Assembly and Senate will likely finalize the Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and full membership of the various policy and fiscal committees for the coming year. Additionally, committees can conduct informational hearings during the interim.

Perhaps most importantly, this session marked the day that legislators may begin to introduce legislation in the new session. While the official deadline to introduce new legislation is still several months away, on February 19<sup>th</sup>, many legislators take the opportunity to introduce bills that need to be acted upon in an expedited fashion, bills that reflect issues that were raised in campaigns, or to just introduce legislation that is a priority for them for the coming year. Generally speaking, bills that are introduced in December are not heard before bills that are introduced closer to bill introduction deadline. That said, several legislators did make announcements about bills that they will be introducing, those bills include:

- Eviction moratorium extension – Assembly Member David Chiu is introducing a bill that would extend the COVID-19-related eviction moratorium that was enacted last year with AB 3088. The Assembly Member’s proposal would extend the moratorium through the end of 2021, with landlords not being able to begin evictions until 2022 without “just cause” unrelated to pandemic-related financial stress. The bill, or other legislation on the topic, will need to be considered early in the legislative session, as the eviction protections established under AB 3088 are scheduled to end on February 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Minimum qualifications for peace officers – Building on police reform legislation that he authored last year, Assembly Member Reggie Jones-Sawyer announced the introduction of legislation that would require an individual to be 25 years old, or have a bachelor’s degree, in order to be a law enforcement officer. While other states have age and education requirements for police officers, Jones-Sawyer’s measure would have the highest age requirement of any state and would join four other states in requiring a bachelor’s degree or a supplemental combination of age and experience. The Assembly Member is introducing the legislation in response to the increasing number of officer involved shootings, citing studies that show college educated officers use force less often, and have fewer complaints against them than their non-college-educated peers.
- Clean Money in Elections – Newly elected Assembly Member Alex Lee has introduced legislation that aims to reduce the level of corporate special interest money in state elections. The intent of the bill is to build on law which prohibits corporations from making direct contributions to federal candidates, and law prohibiting their contributions in over 20 other states, by barring all business entities from contributing to candidates running for office in California.

Ultimately, the Legislature will introduce in excess of two thousand bill proposals this year, which will cover a broad range of issues. Based on comments from the Assembly Speaker and President Pro Tem, it is likely that there will be a significant focus place on bills that attempt to address issues related to the coronavirus pandemic, including support for small businesses, and expanding access to broadband internet so people can more reliably work/educate at home. The Legislature is also likely to place an emphasis on bills related to police reform; preparing for, and responding to, wildfires; affordable housing and homelessness; and issues related to the State Budget.

As noted above, the Legislature will return to session on January 4<sup>th</sup> to begin session; later that week, the Governor will provide the Legislature with his January Budget proposal and the session will be in full swing.

### Governor’s COVID-19 Action Summary

Below is a summary of the major COVID-19 actions taken by the State Administration since December 1:

**December 3 – Regional Stay At Home Order** The regional Stay at Home Order is broken down into regions, and covers Riverside as part of a larger Southern California region seeing

constrained hospital capacity. The order will go into effect within 48 hours of the specific region reaching less than 15 percent intensive-care unit capacity. regions hitting that capacity number. Once enacted, the order will remain in effect for at least 3 weeks and, after that period, will be lifted when a region's projected ICU capacity meets or exceeds 15%. This will be assessed on a weekly basis after the initial 3-week period. **The Southern California region entered into this Stay At Home Order Status on December 6 and will be there through at least December 28.**

The five regions being measured are:

- **Northern California:** Del Norte, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, Trinity
- **Bay Area:** Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma
- **Greater Sacramento:** Alpine, Amador, Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, Sierra, Sutter, Yolo, Yuba
- **San Joaquin Valley:** Calaveras, Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, San Benito, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare, Tuolumne
- **Southern California:** Imperial, Inyo, Los Angeles, Mono, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura

## **Federal Legislative Update**

### **Coronavirus Aid Packages**

A bipartisan group of lawmakers, the "908 Coalition" (in reference to the top-line price tag of the framework), is working to negotiate deals for a Phase 4 stimulus package. State and local aid and liability protections remain as two of the biggest sticking points among Democrats and Republicans.

- Negotiators have an agreement in principle on providing:
  - \$160 billion for state and local funding (still no formula available)
  - Liability protections "as the basis for good faith negotiations"
  - 16-week extension of unemployment insurance, with a \$300/week supplemental
  - \$300 billion for small businesses, including the ability to get a second forgivable PPP loan, with expanded eligibility criteria
  - Funding for independent live venue operators
  - Funding for airports, buses, and public transit systems
  - Additional funding for health care providers and vaccine development/distribution/testing/tracing
  - \$82 billion for education, including a set-aside for higher education similar to the CARES Act
  - Extension of student loan forbearance through April 30, 2021
  - \$25 billion in rental assistance to state and local governments
  - Extends the national eviction moratorium
  - SNAP and other emergency food adjustments
  - \$10 billion to child-care providers
  - Funding for broadband and internet access

The coalition has yet to finalize the legislative text of their \$908 billion proposal. They are trying to garner additional support from legislators of both parties, with time quickly running out. Congress is under pressure to pass more COVID-19 relief funding prior to December 31, when

multiple aid programs, including extra unemployment benefits of \$300 per week for nearly 12 million people, eviction moratoriums, and student loan deferments, are all set to expire.

Meanwhile, rumors are circulating that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's staff told other top congressional aides that they see no possible path over an agreement on state aid and on liability reached by the bipartisan group of senators that would be acceptable to Senate Republicans. This is a setback for negotiations, which are hyper focused on developing a proposal that can pass the Senate in 2020. The Republican caucus remains split, with some members opposing any additional funding for coronavirus, making it difficult for McConnell to build a coalition that involves a majority of Senator's voting for passage

### President-Elect Biden Transition

On December 6, the incoming Biden Administration nominated California Attorney General Xavier Becerra to be the Secretary of Health and Human Services – a massive job to take on in the middle of a pandemic.

Becerra is the first Latino to serve as the attorney general of California and has been in the post since 2017. He has been a fierce opponent of President Donald Trump, and the state of California has brought more than 100 lawsuits against the President and his administration's policies. More than half of the lawsuits are over environmental policies that the Trump administration had either put in place or removed. Becerra has also been a leader in the fight to protect the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program an Obama-era program that Trump has attempted to abolish that has shielded from deportation certain undocumented immigrants who came to the US as children.

This nomination has a potentially large impact on California politics. Should Attorney General Becerra be confirmed, Governor Newsom will select a replacement, in addition to the replacement that Governor Newsom will select to replace Vice President Elect Harris. Any nominee for Attorney General is required to be an active attorney in good standing with the California state bar for last 5 years – which limits the list of possible names the Governor can select

If Governor Newsom selects California Secretary of State Alex Padilla to Vice President-elect Kamala Harris's Senate seat, he would have the unique chance to pick (at least) 3 high-profile leaders. It would be the first time in nearly 70 years that a California governor has had 3 seats to select. Between December 1952 and early January 1953, Gov. Earl Warren had to appoint a new U.S. senator, state controller and a member of the Board of Equalization, the state's elected tax commission – lower profile appointments than Newsom may face.