

Date of Hearing: June 2, 2020

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Lorena Gonzalez, Chair

AB 2092 (Rodriguez) – As Amended May 4, 2020

Policy Committee: Labor and Employment

Vote: 5 - 1

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill requires an emergency ambulance provider to inform an emergency ambulance employee, as defined, of the employee's right to request safety devices and safeguards, such as body protection from ballistic or stabbing attacks, at the beginning of the employee's shift.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Additional costs of approximately \$80,000 for California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) to conduct rulemaking to implement the requirements of this bill.
- 2) No additional state or local government costs because this bill applies only to private sector emergency ambulance providers.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Background.** Existing law requires every employer to "furnish and use safety devices and safeguards" to keep an employee and their place of work safe. Generally, Cal/OSHA enforces this provision and other workplace safety laws, such as the requirement that an employer have an injury and illness prevention program.

The California ambulance services industry employs tens of thousands of employees statewide. According to the California Ambulance Association, there are 715 public and private ambulance service statewide, and 75% of ambulances are operated by private providers.

Data on the safety of the ambulance industry presents a conflicting picture. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, nationally the ambulance services industry had one of the highest incidence rates of injuries and illnesses, with more than 60,000 cases in 2018. Fortunately, fatalities are rare. According to American Legion, an opponent to this bill, there was just one fatality among emergency medical technicians (EMTs) nationwide between 2011 and 2018.

- 2) **Purpose.** According to the author, this bill will provide EMTs and first responders "adequate safeguard associated with their occupation and affirms their right to a safe and protected workplace."
- 3) **Recent legislation.** AB 26 (Rodriguez), of 2019-20 Legislative Session, proposes to require emergency ambulance providers to supply emergency ambulance employees with body

armor and safety equipment to wear during the employee's work shift. This bill is pending in the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee.

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