

Los Angeles County Professional Peace Officers Association - Comments

Good morning, I will be addressing agenda items number 21, 73-A, and general comment.

Madam Chair and Members of the Board;

My name is Tab Rhodes, and I am the President of the Los Angeles County Professional Peace Officers Association which represents over 9,000 active and retired members of the County workforce.

Our members, by definition of their roles, advocate for the safety of the citizens of Los Angeles County, however, the COVID-19 pandemic, like many other issues in society currently, is often defined by emotion. Many of our membership have already been vaccinated or as front-line responders, suffered the effects of COVID-19, presumably now having antibodies against future infection. Others, have strong feelings related to the vaccine and its lack of FDA approval. For these reasons, we cannot support a blanket mandate of vaccinations for all County employees as defined in item 73-A.

While we understand the governing responsibilities of the Board of Supervisors during this health crisis, our association believes the Executive Order of item 73-A as written is too restrictive and will actually harm the intention. Conversely, our members would appreciate a more comprehensive review by the Board of Supervisors of the related motion, item number 21. The built-in options of obtaining a vaccination and/or weekly testing, would be viewed by our members as more beneficial, collaborative, and present a level of individual compliance which is the ultimate goal, navigation out of this pandemic and returning to life as normal.

For our membership to fully embrace compliance with COVID-19 protocols, we need more information about proposed policies and testing procedures. If we could, one suggestion would be to research existing best practices of other public entities, including the recently presented protocols enacted by the California Department of Public Health as it related to state employees. These protocols seem to communicate the state's intentions in addressing this pandemic as well as could be used for uniformity toward employees of the County with those of neighboring cities and counties.

The Los Angeles County Professional Peace Officers Association is grateful for the recognition by this Board of the importance of engaging with the County's labor partners. We fully appreciate this and other opportunities to have collaborative conversations with the Board of Supervisors on these concerns.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration of our members' perspectives and sacrifices as essential workers.