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CALIFORNIA CONTRACT CITIES ASSOCIATION

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July 24, 2018

The Honorable Shirley Weber
Assemblymember, 79th District
State Capitol, Room 3123
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 931 (Weber) Criminal Procedure: Use of Force by Peace Officers - Oppose

Dear Assemblymember Weber,

California Contract Cities Association (Contract Cities) respectfully opposes AB 931 (Weber), which would alter the existing use of force standards from “reasonable” to “necessary.” Contract Cities represents 76 cities with over 7.5 million residents across California. The Association’s core mission is to advance the benefits of local control and cities’ ability to contract services.

Contract Cities was founded on the ability of cities to contract law enforcement services, which forty-six of our members contract directly with Sheriff’s Department of Los Angeles, Ventura, Riverside, Contra Costa, and San Mateo Counties. This flexibility has allowed law enforcement to plan regional strategies to reduce and prevent crimes while allowing small and medium-sized cities greater flexibility to spend general fund monies for public services in infrastructure and senior programs. Cities have also taken steps to reduce costs through the California Joint Powers Insurance Authority to service insurance and liability costs that arise from law enforcement services.

However, in recent years, cities have seen liability costs skyrocket, coinciding with increasing media attention and public scrutiny. While a majority of law enforcement personnel continues to combat crime using existing policies and best practices, the availability of social and mass media has disproportionately portrayed law enforcement efforts negatively. The liability costs have placed tremendous stress on city finances, draining budgets and limiting other public services. Cities have also taken steps to work directly with our law enforcement agencies to reduce liability costs through use-of-force training, de-escalation, and other alternatives.

Law enforcement agencies are continuing to reduce liability outcomes for service and reduce harm to members of the public. AB 931 would hamstring existing efforts by law enforcement, raising uncertainty for situations that may be deemed as necessary use-of-force when responding to calls for assistance.

Moreover, law enforcement agencies have taken additional steps relating to the outcomes from criminal justice reform (i.e. AB 109, Proposition 47 and 57). Data has shown a decline in major criminal offenses, however other forms of criminal activity are on the rise, including serial theft crime and burglary, impacting the overall safety of our constituents and cities. Calls for service will continue to escalate, posing additional risks to our cities and law enforcement agencies.

For the reasons indicated above, Contract Cities respectfully opposes AB 931. We remain committed to ensuring accountability and transparency of all public agencies, including law enforcement. However, the additional risks and uncertainty from AB 931 would only result in an additional liability costs and burden to current reforms undertaken by our law enforcement agencies today. If you have any questions, please contact Michael Vuong at michael@contractcities.org.

Sincerely,



Jorge Morales
Vice Mayor, City of South Gate
President, California Contract Cities Association



Marcel Rodarte
Executive Director
California Contract Cities Association

cc: Chair and Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
League of California Cities