



April 13, 2018

Honorable Freddie Rodriguez
Chair, Assembly Public Employees, Retirement, and Social Security Committee
1020 N Street, Room
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Assembly Bill 2154 (Bonta) – Public employees: new employee orientations.
Oppose Unless Amended – As amended April 2, 2018
Hearing Date – April 15, 2018: Assembly Public Employees, Retirement, and Social
Security (PERSS) Committee**

Dear Assembly Member Rodriguez:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to share our respectful “oppose unless amended” position Assembly Bill 2154 (Bonta), which seeks to create a uniform and expanded standard of time off without loss of compensation for public employees to engage in specified activities related to employer-employee relations, also known as release time. While we have general concerns about the erosion of the collective bargaining process, by and large, our local agency employers find many of the provisions in the bill to be reasonable. We do remain deeply concerned, however, with the provisions regarding employee orientation release time and the expansion of terms used to establish eligible activities under release time.

Assembly Bill 119 (Committee on Budget; 2017) took effect in June 2017 and requires public employers to provide all new employees with an orientation that includes an opportunity for exclusive representatives to meet with the new employees, if they are represented. Our organizations worked closely with the Administration and other stakeholders on AB 119 to negotiate terms that would leave the time, scope and manner of the orientation to be determined locally. Cities, counties, and special districts throughout the state have said this process has gone smoothly so far and has not been a contentious issue or reported the need to invoke binding interest arbitration.

Unfortunately, we view AB 2154 as unwinding this carefully crafted and recently enacted agreement by requiring employers to give release time to employees who serve as the exclusive representative at new employee orientations. Some employer agencies shared they have weekly new employee orientations that offer 30-minutes to the exclusive representatives. In this instance, any number of employees could be granted two to three hours per month of paid time to complete duties on behalf of their unit. Larger agencies that may have bi-weekly orientations would see even greater paid time through local revenue for the purposes employee representative outreach to their membership.

continued

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Employer size aside, we respectfully request that Subsection 5 of Section 3558.7(b) be stricken from the bill to ensure all components of the mandatory new employee orientation access remain as intended in the law signed less than one year ago.

Regarding the additional terms in the amendments dated April 2, we believe the inclusion of allowable release time to also include "preparation" for meetings is problematic and not well defined. Further clarification is needed here to ensure understanding and so the reasonableness test can be uniformly applied.

For the aforementioned reasons, we have an "oppose unless amended position." We look forward to further discussions and please do not hesitate to contact Dillon Gibbons (CSDA) at 916-442-7887, Dorothy Johnson (CSAC) at 916-650-8133; Dane Hutchings (LCC) (916) 658-8200, about our position or the amendments requested.

Sincerely,



Dane Hutchings
Legislative Representative



Dorothy Johnson
Legislative Representative



Dillon Gibbons
Senior Legislative Representative

cc: The Honorable Rob Bonta, California State Assembly
Honorable Members, Assembly PERSS Committee
Michael Bolden, Chief Consultant, Assembly PERSS Committee
Joshua White, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus