

EUNICE M. ULLOA
Mayor



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CITY of CHINO

May 19, 2022

California State Assembly
The Honorable Freddie Rodriguez
State Capitol (Room 2188)
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0052
SENT VIA EMAIL

Re: California Senate Bill 1044 (2021-2022 Regular Session)

To the Honorable California State Assembly Member Freddie Rodriguez:

The City of Chino (“City”) respectfully submits this opposition letter for Senate Bill (“SB”) 1044. As of this writing, the proposed bill is with the State Senate Appropriations Committee. Admittedly, the City is sending this letter with the presumption that it will pass through the State Senate and move to the State Assembly. This is why the City sending this letter to your office at this time.

The Honorable State Senator Connie Leyva is a co-author to this bill. In coming off a devastating two years from the COVID-19 pandemic, the City empathizes with the concern State Senator Leyva has for the welfare of employees. However, after serving over 30 years as an EMT, I am certain you can appreciate the concerns the City has with this bill. Under SB 1044, when a state of emergency is declared and an employee has determined that they feel “unsafe” at work, they may refuse to report for duty. An employer will be unable to act against an employee that leaves the workplace or declines to come to work. There is no exemption for first responders or essential workers. This concern is underscored by the lack of clear, objective criteria to be used to determine when an employee legitimately feels “unsafe” at work.

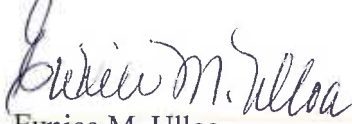
While I trust that City of Chino employees will report to work when a disaster strikes again, I cannot say the same for other agencies. As a government agency, it is incumbent upon us to serve the public regardless of the circumstance. Our police officers and fire fighters face dangerous circumstances daily, and they, along with all our City staff, continued to serve the public in-person even when COVID-19 lockdowns were in place. I write this all to highlight that when crisis occurs, people look to their government agencies for guidance and leadership. When the people holding government positions have gone home because they felt unsafe, it dismantles our purpose as government leaders. This does not even address the substantial and considerable impacts this bill will have on our local businesses that still trying to return to normal.

As we are coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City understands that those terrible experiences are likely driving this bill. Of course, as employers, it is our duty to ensure that a safe work environment is always



provided. However, this bill is broad, and its provisions are vague. It will provide numerous opportunities for employees to vacate their posts without any consequences. Since this bill will hurt our local businesses and undermine the City's efforts to serve its residents, as it is written, the City cannot support this bill. Therefore, the City requests that you vote "NO" on SB 1044.

Sincerely,



Eunice M. Ulloa
Mayor