



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Assemblymember Rodriguez's Legislation to Enhance Suicide Prevention Programming Amongst First Responders Clears the State Legislature**

**(Sacramento, CA)** – Today, Assembly Bill (AB) 662 passed the State Assembly and is now heading to the Governor's desk, awaiting his final signature. If enacted, this legislation would provide for suicide prevention programming that would establish an evidence-based, comprehensive, and tiered approach to suicide safety amongst first responders statewide. Additional training standards, including criteria for curriculum developed by the Statewide Training and Education Advisory Committee, will be established by the California State Fire Marshall.

"As a career first responder, I know that combatting the suicide crisis within our industry is vital to the overall wellbeing of the profession. Having lived it, I understand the demands and stress that can become unbearable for too many. This bill is the first step in prioritizing the mental health of all first responders," **stated Assemblymember Rodriguez.**

[The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) report](#) that first responders are at elevated risk of suicide due to their work environments, work culture, and stress. This stress can either stem from one specific incident or an accumulation of daily stress. The pandemic only heightened this epidemic, as at least 18 California firefighters have taken their lives since the start in 2020.

The CDC has found a successful approach to combatting suicide among first responders through peer-to-peer counseling and peer teams. In addition to peer-to-peer assistance, other successful strategies have included mental health checkups and time-off to decompress following an especially traumatic call, among other things.

Peer-to-peer assistance is a vital tool that needs to be implemented as general practitioners may not understand the actual experiences of first responders and relate to them in the way they need. Initiating these programs will help participants recognize the suicidal thoughts of their colleagues and connect them with the resources that may save their life.

"When you are in the field, you can spend as much, if not more, time with your partner and colleagues than your family. Training first responders to recognize signs of mental distress in their peers will help to alleviate daily stressors and combat this ongoing crisis. These programs are intended to save the lives of those who have dedicated themselves to saving others," **added Assemblymember Rodriguez.**

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*Assemblymember Rodriguez ([Twitter](#)) represents the 52nd Assembly District which includes the cities of Chino, Montclair, Ontario, Pomona, and portions of unincorporated Fontana. He is Chair of the Assembly Committee on Emergency Management.*