



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Governor Newsom Signs Legislation to Extend the COVID-19 Disability Retirement Sunset Date**

**(Sacramento, CA)** – On Thursday evening, Governor Newsom signed Assembly Bill (AB) 551, authored by Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez (D – Pomona), into law. This legislation extends the sunset date for the public pension disability retirement COVID-19 presumption established under AB 845 (Rodriguez, Chapter 122, Statutes of 2021). Initially, this provision would have become inoperative in January of 2023, but now it is extended until January 1, 2024.

“Our frontline workers have worked tirelessly to treat our illnesses, keep our lights on, our water running, and our food stocked, despite the risk of COVID-19 infection that faced on the job. AB 551 ensures these workers are financially protected and do not need to fight for benefits they are already entitled to under existing pension law,” **stated Assemblymember Rodriguez.**

As we are still learning about the lingering and disabling effects of “long haul” COVID-19, we must continue to protect workers should these effects be so debilitating they can no longer provide for themselves or their families.

[The Mayo Clinic reports](#) that COVID-19 has left individuals with long-lasting and permanent conditions. Some of these conditions include heart, lung, and brain damage, blood clots and vessel issues, depression, anxiety, and fatigue. Furthermore, those more advanced in age face a more severe risk of serious illness and life-threatening complications such as organ failure, heart problems, extreme lung conditions, and blood clots.

AB 551 allows for workers to be eligible for in-service disability retirement for specified essential employees who retire due to a COVID-19-related illness contracted on the job. Employees who will continue to be protected under this legislation include health care providers, firefighters, law enforcement, and public servants for an additional year.

“We have learned a lot from the pandemic; however, many are still learning about the effects of lingering COVID-19. Protecting those who work tirelessly to protect, educate, and serve our communities provides them with the opportunity to continue doing so without fear of financial burdens should they become ill,” **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.*