

BROAD & GUSMAN
GOVERNMENTAL ADVOCACY

To: All Members of the Assembly

From: Shane Gusman
Matt Broad

Date: June 8, 2020

Re: AB 2357 (Rodriguez) – **SUPPORT**

The Engineers and Scientists of California, IFPTE Local 20 support AB 2537 by Assembly Member Freddie Rodriguez.

AB 2537 would require employers to provide and ensure that employees that provide direct patient care in hospital settings use personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect such employees. This bill also requires these same employers to maintain a stockpile of unexpired personal protective equipment in the amount equal to one year of normal consumption.

Our frontline nurse members and health care members treating patients with infectious diseases are likely exposed to the highest risk of infection because of their close, frequent contact with patients and working longer hours than usual. By the nature of their profession, health care workers in California are in daily danger of being directly exposed to all infectious diseases and novel pathogens, including COVID-19.

Title IIX regulations, particularly Sections 3380 and 5199, require health care employers to provide PPE to workers, with no costs to workers, and ensure that the equipment is effectively used. Also, the US Department of Labor and Department of Health and Human Services have encouraged employers to stockpile face masks and respirators in advance of a pandemic. It is clear now that manufacturing capacity at the time of an outbreak does not meet expected demand during a pandemic.

AB 2537 amends the Labor Code and reinforces an employer's responsibility to provide adequate PPE. It requires employers to maintain an adequate stockpile of PPE in case of a future emergency and requires employers to provide an inventory of their stockpiles to Cal-OSHA upon request. Lastly, this measure ensures that an employer who violates this requirement shall be assessed a civil penalty of up to twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) for each such violation pursuant to Cal-OSHA regulations.

AB 2537 is a measure that puts forth reasonable provisions that will improve the safety of RNs and other health care workers throughout the state.

For the above reasons, we urge your "aye" vote on AB 2537.

cc: Assembly Member Freddie Rodriguez