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PROPOSITION 11

REQUIRES PRIVATE-SECTOR EMERGENCY AMBULANCE EMPLOYEES TO REMAIN ON-CALL DURING WORK BREAKS. ELIMINATES CERTAIN EMPLOYER LIABILITY. INITIATIVE STATUTE.

OFFICIAL TITLE AND SUMMARY

The text of this measure can be found on the Secretary of State’s website at http://voterguide.sos.ca.gov

- Makes labor law entitling hourly employees to take work breaks for meals and rest, without being on-call, inapplicable to private-sector emergency ambulance employees. Regulates timing of meal breaks for these employees.
- Eliminates employers’ liability—in actions pending on or after October 25, 2017—for violations of existing law regarding work breaks. Requires employers to provide training regarding certain emergency incidents, violence prevention, and mental health and wellness.
- Requires employers to provide employees certain mental-health services.

SUMMARY OF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST’S ESTIMATE OF NET STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT FISCAL IMPACT:

- Likely fiscal benefit to local governments (in the form of lower costs and higher revenues), potentially in the tens of millions of dollars each year.

ANALYSIS BY THE LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

BACKGROUND

911 EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION

Ambulances Provide Emergency Medical Care and Transportation. When a 911 call is made for medical help, an ambulance crew is sent to the location. (Typically, a local fire department vehicle is also sent.) At the scene, the crew provides medical treatment to the patient. If needed, the crew drives the patient to the nearest hospital. (Ambulances also provide nonemergency rides to hospitals or doctors’ offices when a patient needs treatment or testing.)

Private Companies Operate Most Ambulances. Private companies own and operate most ambulances in California. They provide about 75 percent of all emergency ambulance rides. In the other 25 percent of cases, the local fire department has its own ambulances and drives patients to the hospital themselves.

Most Ambulance Trips Are Paid for by Health Insurance. State law requires ambulances to transport all patients, even patients who have no health insurance and cannot pay. In most cases, however, insurance pays for ambulance trips. More than two-thirds of ambulance trips are for patients with government insurance, such as Medicare and Medicaid (known as Medi-Cal in California). About 20 percent of trips are for patients with commercial health insurance, typically insurance people get through their job. The other trips are for patients with no insurance.

Commercial Insurance Pays More for Ambulance Trips Than Government Insurance Pays. The average cost of an ambulance trip in California is about $750. Medicare and Medi-Cal pay ambulance companies a fixed amount for each trip. Medicare pays about $450 per trip and Medi-Cal pays about $100 per trip. As a result, ambulance companies lose money transporting Medicare and Medi-Cal patients. Ambulance companies also lose money when they transport patients with no insurance. This is because these patients typically cannot pay for these trips. To make up for these losses, ambulance companies bill patients with commercial insurance more than the average cost of an ambulance trip. On average, commercial insurers pay $1,800 per trip, more than double the cost of a typical ambulance ride.

THE EMERGENCY AMBULANCE INDUSTRY

Counties Select Main Ambulance Providers. County agencies divide the county into several zones. The ambulance company that is chosen to serve each zone has the exclusive right to respond to all emergency calls in that area. The company generates revenue by collecting payments from patients’ insurers. In exchange, the ambulance company pays the county for the right to provide ambulance trips in that area. The county typically chooses the ambulance company through a competitive bidding process. Ambulance companies bid by offering a competitive service—for instance, responding to most 911 calls within a certain amount of time—and a competitive
payment to the county. The county picks the best offer and signs a multiyear contract with that company.

**Local Ambulance Contracts Reflect Industry Costs in That Area.** Ambulance companies propose response time agreements and payment levels to the county that would be profitable for their business. In developing bids, they calculate how much it would cost to provide ambulance services in the area and how much revenue they would generate. This, in turn, would depend on the mix of insurance types in the area. A high share of patients with private insurance means they can expect to generate more revenue. A high share of government-insured and uninsured patients means they would generate less revenue.

**To Respond Quickly, Most Ambulances Are Not Stationed at Permanent Locations.** Unlike fire department crews, who wait for emergency calls at their permanent location, most ambulance crews are positioned throughout a city or region to anticipate 911 calls. After a 911 call arrives and the nearest ambulance responds, other ambulance crews in the area reposition to cover the area again for the next 911 call. This practice—known as “posting”—lets the ambulance provider meet the response time requirements in its contract while using fewer ambulance crews than would be needed if they were stationed at permanent locations, resulting in lower overall costs.

**EMT s AND PARAMEDICS**

**California’s Ambulance EMTs and Paramedics.** There are 17,000 emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and paramedics in California and about 3,600 ambulances. EMTs provide first aid and basic medical care. Paramedics provide advanced medical care. Ambulances have two crew members—two EMTs, an EMT and a paramedic, or two paramedics. Ambulance crews normally work 12-hour shifts.

**Some EMTs and Paramedics Receive Mental Health Services.** Emergency response personnel—such as police officers, firefighters, EMTs, and paramedics—often experience traumatic events during work. These include work-related injuries, natural disasters, terrorism, or accidents involving children. As a result, people in these jobs have higher rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and suicide than the general public. Many ambulance employers offer counseling for staff who have experienced a traumatic event. Some employers also provide wellness education and mental health service plans.

**Some EMTs and Paramedics Receive Additional Training.** State officials, in coordination with private ambulance companies, oversee training to help EMTs and paramedics respond to natural disasters, situations involving active gunfire, and acts of terrorism. These circumstances require special responses—such as removing injured patients from dangerous areas—not included as part of standard EMT or paramedic training.

**MEAL AND REST BREAKS FOR EMTS AND PARAMEDICS**

**Employers Must Follow State Labor Laws About Meal and Rest Breaks.** California employers must follow various labor laws, including rules about the state minimum wage, how many hours can be worked, health and safety in the workplace, and meal and rest breaks. Most employers must provide an unpaid 30-minute meal break during each work shift and a paid 10-minute rest break every four hours.

**Meal and Rest Breaks Taken by EMTs and Paramedics.** In practice, EMTs and paramedics are “on call” for their entire work shift in case they receive an emergency call. This means that their breaks are sometimes interrupted by 911 calls. They can also be interrupted by a request to reposition to a new posting location. As a result, EMTs and paramedics are often unable to plan their meal and rest breaks. At the same time, most ambulance shifts include down time between emergency calls. (Urban areas tend to have less down time than rural areas do.) As a result, crews often have enough down time in their shift to take uninterrupted meal and rest breaks even though they are technically on call.

**Recent Court Decision Likely Requires “Off-Duty” Breaks for EMTs and Paramedics.** In 2016, the California Supreme Court ruled that on-call breaks violate state labor law. Instead, employers must provide breaks that are off-duty and not interruptible, even if an emergency occurs. The decision was *Augustus v. ABM Security Services*. The case involved private security guards whose employer required that they keep their radios on during breaks. The court awarded the company’s security guards payments due to the violations.
Before the Augustus decision was made, EMTs and paramedics had filed several similar lawsuits against private ambulance companies. These lawsuits are still active. Labor laws and industry practices for private security guards are similar to the laws and industry practices for EMTs and paramedics. Due to these similarities, it appears likely that the Augustus decision will also apply to EMTs and paramedics in the near future.

Full Compliance With Augustus Decision Would Increase Costs for Ambulance Companies. To follow state law under Augustus, ambulance crews would have to go off-duty during their meal and rest breaks. As a result, in order to meet the terms of their existing contracts, ambulance companies would likely have to operate significantly more ambulances in each area than they do now. This would increase costs to ambulance companies—potentially by more than $100 million each year statewide.

Ambulance Industry Response to Augustus Decision. To address higher costs and still remain profitable, companies would need to raise revenue and/or reduce costs. In response to the Augustus decision, ambulance companies could:

- **Negotiate Legal Agreements That Allow Partial Compliance.** In some cases, ambulance companies and EMTs and paramedics could agree to a meal and rest break compromise that is less costly for ambulance companies than providing off-duty breaks. Potential agreements such as these would be a compromise between current industry practice and full compliance with Augustus, with costs lower than fully complying with Augustus.

- **Increase Insurance Charges.** Ambulance companies could charge commercial insurance companies more for their patients’ trips. If commercial insurers agreed to pay these higher rates, this would likely increase health insurance premiums for people with commercial health insurance. As noted earlier, ambulance companies already charge insurers much more than the average cost for an ambulance trip. Ambulance companies might be able to generate some additional revenue from insurance companies, but it appears unlikely that the full cost of compliance with the Augustus decision could be covered in this way.

- **Reduce Business Costs.** Ambulance companies could change the way they do business to reduce costs. They could, for instance, lengthen their response times for emergency calls or replace higher paid paramedics with EMTs (who are generally paid lower wages). Ambulance companies would need to negotiate these changes with counties. These types of changes would likely be minor and therefore not provide major cost savings.

- **Smaller Contract Payments to Local Governments.** Ambulance companies could pay counties less for the right to provide ambulance services in each area. In areas that are least profitable, ambulance companies might no longer be able to pay for the right to provide ambulance services in that area. In these cases, counties might need to pay ambulance companies to ensure ambulance services remain available in that area.

Much of These New Costs Would Be Paid by Counties. Although increased costs associated with compliance with Augustus would be offset by ambulance companies in a variety of ways, as discussed above, it appears likely that much of these higher costs would be borne by counties.

**PROPOSAL**

This measure makes changes to state laws that affect private-sector EMTs and paramedics. The measure would not apply to EMTs and paramedics who work for public agencies, such as fire departments. The measure is described in more detail below.

**Requires On-Call Meal and Rest Breaks for EMTs and Paramedics.** The measure requires EMTs and paramedics to stay on call during their whole shift. In effect, the measure continues the industry practice of requiring EMTs and paramedics to remain on call during breaks. At the same time, however, the measure requires that meal breaks (1) not be during the first or last hour of a shift, and (2) be spaced at least two hours apart. The measure requires ambulance companies to operate enough ambulances to meet these meal break schedules.

**Seeks to Limit Costs for Past Practice of On-Call Meal and Rest Breaks.** The Augustus decision suggests
that the practice of requiring EMTs and paramedics to stay on call during breaks is against the law. Private ambulance companies may now owe penalties for these past violations. Several groups of EMTs and paramedics have sued ambulance companies alleging these violations. These lawsuits are still active. In addition to requiring on-call meal and rest breaks going forward, this measure states that the past industry practice of on-call meal and rest breaks was allowable. This could eliminate costs that ambulance companies may face related to these lawsuits.

Requires Employer-Paid Training and Mental Health Services. The measure requires ambulance companies to offer EMTs and paramedics (1) annual natural disaster, active shooter, and violence prevention training; (2) mental health and wellness education; (3) mental health counseling sessions; and (4) access to long-term mental health services.

FISCAL EFFECTS

As described above, the legal status of labor law requirements on industries such as ambulance services is currently in flux. It appears likely, however, that ambulance companies will be required in the near future to provide off-duty meal and rest breaks. If so, this will have the effect of significantly raising costs of providing ambulance services. These higher costs would affect counties, by reducing ambulance company payments to them and/or by requiring county payments to ambulance companies to ensure adequate services.

Under Proposition 11, however, ambulance companies would avoid most of these new costs, as the measure generally would allow them to continue operating as they have in the past. That is, they could continue to use on-call meal and rest breaks. As a result, Proposition 11 would have the following impacts on ambulance company costs:

- **Lower Net Operating Expenses.** This measure requires EMTs and paramedics to stay on call during breaks. Thus, ambulance companies would not face new ongoing costs—potentially more than $100 million per year—associated with providing off-duty breaks. At the same time, ambulance companies would need to operate somewhat more ambulances than they do under current practice in order to comply with the measure’s other requirements related to meal and rest break schedules. This would result in some new costs. On net, these on-call meal and rest break laws would result in lower costs in the high tens of millions of dollars annually for ambulance companies compared to the cost of complying with Augustus.

- **Some New Costs to Provide Training and Mental Health Services.** Ambulance companies that do not currently offer the training and mental health services required by this measure would pay new costs to provide them. These benefits would likely cost ambulance companies several million dollars each year.

- **Potential Avoidance of One-Time Costs.** Proposition 11 seeks to limit costs that ambulance companies might face as a result of active lawsuits regarding meal and rest break violations. (The companies could owe payments to workers due to these violations.) Whether the measure limits these costs would likely be determined by the courts. If the measure does eliminate these costs, ambulance companies would avoid unknown, but potentially large, one-time costs.

Fiscal Benefit to Local Governments Due to Lower Net Ambulance Costs. Due to lower net ambulance company costs, this measure would result in fiscal benefits to local governments (in the form of lower costs and higher revenues), potentially in the tens of millions of dollars each year. This is because ambulance companies would avoid increased costs associated with providing off-duty meal and rest breaks. A portion of these benefits would go to insurance companies, but most would go to local governments.

Visit http://www.sos.ca.gov/campaign-lobbying/cal-access-resources/measure-contributions/2018-ballot-measure-contribution-totals/ for a list of committees primarily formed to support or oppose this measure. Visit http://www.fppc.ca.gov/transparency/top-contributors/nov-18-gen.html to access the committee’s top 10 contributors.

If you desire a copy of the full text of the state measure, please call the Secretary of State at (800) 345-VOTE (8683) or you can email vigfeedback@sos.ca.gov and a copy will be mailed at no cost to you.
Section 8 of Article II of the California Constitution.

PROPOSED LAW

SECTION 1. Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 880) is added to Part 2 of Division 2 of the Labor Code, to read:

Chapter 7. Emergency Ambulance Services

Article 1. Title

880. This act shall be known, and may be cited, as the Emergency Ambulance Employee Safety and Preparedness Act.

Article 2. Findings and Declarations

881. The people of the State of California find and declare the following:

(a) California has the nation’s largest population, third largest landmass, and is prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes, wildfires, and floods. These circumstances demand a well-trained emergency ambulance workforce.

(b) In California, private companies provide the primary emergency medical technician (EMT) and paramedic services for 74 percent of state residents. Unfortunately, catastrophes like natural disasters, active shooters, and mass casualty incidents occur far too frequently throughout the state and nation. Like all other first responders, emergency ambulance employees such as EMTs and paramedics must be adequately trained and available to respond to all types of crises and pleas for help.

(c) Private companies that employ emergency ambulance employees such as EMTs and paramedics should be required to provide compensated yearly training to prepare them to handle active shooter and mass casualty incidents, in addition to natural disasters.

(d) It takes a special type of person to be an emergency ambulance employee like an EMT or paramedic dedicated to serve, protect, and provide lifesaving services for their fellow neighbors around the clock. Emergency ambulance employees such as EMTs and paramedics often witness traumatic events.
Employers should provide mental health services to emergency ambulance employees.

(e) Emergency ambulance employees such as EMTs and paramedics work hard and can be called into action at any time during their work shift to provide lifesaving care. Therefore, it is important that they receive adequate meal and rest time to remain at their peak performance.

Article 3. Statement of Purpose

882. The purpose of the Emergency Ambulance Employee Safety and Preparedness Act is to enhance public health and safety by ensuring that emergency ambulance employees such as EMTs and paramedics receive adequate training, meal and rest time, and mental health benefits and are available to respond to 911 emergency-type requests for medical assistance at all times.

Article 4. Emergency Ambulance Employee Safety and Preparedness

883. Training.

(a) In addition to other minimum employment qualifications and certifications, every emergency ambulance employee shall annually receive employer-paid training in each of the following areas:

(1) Responding to active shooter and mass casualty incidents.

(2) Responding to natural disasters.

(3) Preventing violence against emergency ambulance employees and patients.

(b) The training required by subdivision (a) shall be provided free of charge to emergency ambulance employees. Emergency ambulance employees shall be compensated at their regular hourly rate of pay while participating in training required by subdivision (a).

(c) The training required to be provided pursuant to this section shall be generally comparable in content, scope, and quality to courses offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Emergency Management Institute or National Training and Education Division, or both.

884. Mental Health.

(a) Every emergency ambulance employee shall receive employer-paid mental health and wellness education within 30 days of being hired and shall receive employer-paid mental health and wellness education each calendar year thereafter. Mental health and wellness education shall inform emergency ambulance employees of available mental health treatments and support services and provide general information regarding common mental health illnesses.

(b) Every emergency ambulance employee shall be entitled to employer-paid mental health services through an employee assistance program (EAP). The EAP coverage shall provide up to 10 mental health treatments per issue, per calendar year.

(c) Every emergency ambulance employee that qualifies for or is eligible to receive employer-provided health insurance shall have access to health insurance plans that offer long-term mental health treatment services.

(d) For purposes of this section, “issue” means episodes of mental health conditions such as stress, depression, grief, loss, relationship struggles, substance abuse, parenting challenges, and other mental health conditions as described within the EAP.

885. Meal and Rest Periods.

(a) All emergency ambulance employees are hereby entitled to meal and rest periods as prescribed elsewhere by the Industrial Welfare Commission.

(b) Emergency ambulance employees shall be compensated at their regular hourly rate of pay during meal and rest periods.

886. Staffing for Meal Periods.

(a) (1) An emergency ambulance provider shall not require an emergency ambulance employee to take a meal period during the first or last hour of a work shift and must allow an emergency ambulance employee to space multiple meal periods during a work shift at least two hours apart.

(2) An emergency ambulance provider shall manage staffing at levels sufficient to provide enough inactivity in a work shift for emergency ambulance employees to meet the requirements of this subdivision.

(b) Any meal period that does not comply with paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) shall not be counted towards the meal periods an employee is entitled to during his or her work shift.
887. Communication to Protect Public Health and Safety.

Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary:

(a) In order to maximize protection of public health and safety, emergency ambulance employees shall remain reachable by a portable communications device throughout the entirety of each work shift.

(b) If an emergency ambulance employee is contacted during a meal or rest period, that particular meal or rest period shall not be counted towards the meal and rest periods the employee is entitled to during his or her work shift.

(c) If an emergency ambulance employee is not contacted during a meal or rest period, that particular meal or rest period shall be counted towards the meal and rest periods the employee is entitled to during his or her work shift.

888. Definitions.

As used in this chapter, all of the following definitions apply:

(a) “Emergency ambulance employee” means a person who meets both of the following requirements:

1) Is an emergency medical technician (EMT), dispatcher, paramedic, or other licensed or certified ambulance transport personnel who contributes to the delivery of ambulance services.

2) Is employed by an emergency ambulance provider.

(b) “Emergency ambulance provider” means an employer that provides ambulance services, but not including the state, or any political subdivision thereof, in its capacity as the direct employer of a person meeting the description contained in paragraph (1) of subdivision (a).

(c) “Contacted” means receiving a message or directive over a portable communications device that requires a response. A bare requirement to carry a portable communications device and remain reachable does not constitute being “contacted.”

(d) “Portable communications device” means a pager, radio, station alert box, intercom, cellular telephone, or other communications method.

(e) “Work shift” means designated hours of work by an emergency ambulance employee, with a designated beginning time and quitting time, including any periods for meals or rest.

889. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, Sections 887 and 888 are declaratory of, and do not alter or amend, existing California law and shall apply to any and all actions pending on, or commenced after, October 25, 2017, alleging a violation of Section 11090 of Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations (Industrial Welfare Commission (IWC) Order No. 9-2001) or any amended, successor, or replacement law, regulation, or IWC order.

Article 5. Amendment

890. The Legislature may amend this chapter by a statute passed in each house of the Legislature by rollcall vote entered in the journal, four-fifths of the membership concurring, provided that the statute is consistent with, and furthers the purposes of, this chapter. No bill seeking to amend this chapter may be passed or become a statute unless the bill has been printed and distributed to the Members of the Legislature, and published on the Internet, in its final form, for at least 12 business days prior to its passage in either house of the Legislature.

SEC. 2. Liberal Construction.

This act shall be liberally construed in order to effectuate its purposes.

SEC. 3. Conflicting Measures.

(a) In the event that this initiative measure and another initiative measure or measures relating to working conditions of emergency ambulance employees shall appear on the same statewide election ballot, the other initiative measure or measures shall be deemed to be in conflict with this measure. In the event that this initiative measure receives a greater number of affirmative votes, the provisions of this measure shall prevail in their entirety, and the provisions of the other initiative measure or measures shall be null and void.

(b) If this initiative measure is approved by the voters but is superseded in whole or in part by any other conflicting initiative measure approved by the voters at the same election, and such conflicting initiative is later held invalid, this
measure shall be self-executing and given full force and effect.

SEC. 4. Severability.
The provisions of this act are severable. If any portion, section, subdivision, paragraph, clause, sentence, phrase, word, or application of this act is for any reason held to be invalid by a decision of any court of competent jurisdiction, that decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this act. The people of the State of California hereby declare that they would have adopted this act and each and every portion, section, subdivision, paragraph, clause, sentence, phrase, word, and application not declared invalid or unconstitutional without regard to whether any portion of this act or application thereof would be subsequently declared invalid.

SEC. 5. Legal Defense.
If this act is approved by the voters of the State of California and thereafter subjected to a legal challenge alleging a violation of state or federal law, and both the Governor and Attorney General refuse to defend this act, then the following actions shall be taken:

(a) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 12500) of Part 2 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code or any other law, the Attorney General shall appoint independent counsel to faithfully and vigorously defend this act on behalf of the State of California.

(b) Before appointing or thereafter substituting independent counsel, the Attorney General shall exercise due diligence in determining the qualifications of independent counsel and shall obtain written affirmation from independent counsel that independent counsel will faithfully and vigorously defend this act. The written affirmation shall be made publicly available upon request.

(c) A continuous appropriation is hereby made from the General Fund to the Controller, without regard to fiscal years, in an amount necessary to cover the costs of retaining independent counsel to faithfully and vigorously defend this act on behalf of the State of California.

PROPOSITION 12
This initiative measure is submitted to the people in accordance with the provisions of Section 8 of Article II of the California Constitution.

This initiative measure amends and adds sections to the Health and Safety Code; therefore, existing provisions proposed to be deleted are printed in strikeout type and new provisions proposed to be added are printed in italic type to indicate that they are new.

PROPOSED LAW
The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. This act shall be known, and may be cited, as the Prevention of Cruelty to Farm Animals Act.

SEC. 2. The purpose of this act is to prevent animal cruelty by phasing out extreme methods of farm animal confinement, which also threaten the health and safety of California consumers, and increase the risk of foodborne illness and associated negative fiscal impacts on the State of California.

SEC. 3. Section 25990 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

25990. Prohibitions. In addition to other applicable provisions of law:

(a) A person, a farm owner or operator within the state shall not tether or confine knowingly cause any covered animal, to be confined in a cruel manner, on a farm, for all or the majority of any day, in a manner that prevents such animal from:

(1) Lying down, standing up, and fully extending his or her limbs, and
(2) Turning around freely.

(b) A business owner or operator shall not knowingly engage in the sale within the state of any of the following:

(1) Whole veal meat that the business owner or operator knows or should know is the meat of a covered animal who was confined in a cruel manner.
(2) Whole pork meat that the business owner or operator knows or should know is the meat of a covered animal who was confined in a cruel manner, or is the meat of immediate offspring of a covered animal who was confined in a cruel manner.