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California State Sheriffs' Association

Organization Founded by the Sheriffs in 1894

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Sheriffs Remain Opposed to SB 54 Unless Further Amended

After careful consideration of the latest amendments (September 11 version) to Senate Bill 54, the California State Sheriffs' Association remains opposed to this measure unless it is further amended. We are very grateful to Governor Brown for listening to our concerns about SB 54 and facilitating significant changes that attempt to address many of the issues we have been talking about for months. Without his leadership and concern for public safety, that simply would not have occurred.

The California State Sheriffs' Association wants to make it very clear that, contrary to Senator de León's comments in announcing the agreement he negotiated with the Governor, California's front-line law enforcement officers do not currently engage in, and have no intention of engaging in, immigration enforcement in the field. California's peace officers have always been and will remain the guardians of our entire communities. We protect and serve all those who live, work, and visit our jurisdictions, regardless of their immigration status.

Our overarching concern remains that limiting local law enforcement's ability to communicate and cooperate with federal law enforcement officers endangers public safety. We offered amendments that would clarify that law enforcement would not engage in enforcing immigration law but that did not remove valuable crime-fighting tools. While a good portion of our suggestions were ultimately incorporated, the bill still goes too far in cutting off communications with the federal government.

The current version of SB 54 would preclude staff in our jails from notifying ICE, at their request, of the pending release of certain wanted, undocumented criminals – including, but not limited to, repeat drunk drivers, misdemeanor hit and run drivers, those who assault peace officers, serial thieves, animal abusers, chronic abusers of dangerous drugs such as methamphetamine and heroin, and known criminal gang members arrested for most misdemeanor crimes. These particular issues should be addressed with further amendments.

In the end, we cannot support legislation that limits our ability to protect our communities in a symbolic attempt to impact federal law and policy.

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