



United Firefighters of Los Angeles City

Local 112, International Association of Fire Fighters

April 23, 2020

Honorable David Ryu
Chairman
Health, Education, Neighborhoods, Parks, Arts, & River Committee
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Chairman Ryu:

I am writing to you in your capacity as the Chairman of the Los Angeles City Council Health, Education, Neighborhoods, Parks, Arts, and River Committee.

On behalf of the 3,500 Firefighters and Paramedics of the United Firefighters of Los Angeles City, Local 112, I am urging you to support the motion presented by Councilmember Joe Buscaino that would allow the Park Rangers of the Los Angeles City Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) to be armed while on duty in accordance with established California state law.

As you know, the 22 sworn City of Los Angeles Park Rangers provide an invaluable service for the residents of Los Angeles in providing protection and security at the hundreds facilities that are managed by the Department of Recreation and Parks in Los Angeles. This includes nearly 200 recreational centers, 61 swimming pools, and countless other facilities including golf and tennis courses, basketball courts, baseball fields, jogging tracks, and so much more. In a city with more than 4 million residents, our RAP facilities play a critical role in providing safe and secure locations for our residents to exercise, participate in organized sports, or just enjoy the fresh air and green space in an urban city like Los Angeles.

Unfortunately, our Park Rangers are called upon far too often to intervene in dangerous and sometimes deadly situations where park patrons are participating in illegal activities and threatening local families that are simply out to enjoy themselves at one of our recreational facilities.

Los Angeles Park Rangers take great pride in their work and do a tremendous job in protecting the public from potential harm. However, by not allowing our Rangers to carry a firearm while on duty, we are putting the public and our Park Rangers at risk when it is not necessary to do so.

Each LA City Park Ranger is required to complete a six-month Certified Academy Training Course, which includes firearm training. This course is administered by California Police Officer Standard Training (CAPOST), which regulates standards and training for all California law enforcement agencies throughout the state. CAPOST recognizes the City of Los Angeles Park Ranger Division and its sworn personnel as a law enforcement agency with full police powers to detain, arrest, book criminal violators, conduct criminal investigations, and so much

more. LA City Park Rangers are also considered full law enforcement officers under California Penal Code section 830.1 and have full police powers throughout the State of California.

The primary responsibility of local government is public safety. With the homeless crisis growing throughout our city, many of our parks are being overrun by individuals with mental illness, substance abuse issues, and a clear tendency to respond to city officials in a confrontational manner. As Firefighters in the City of Los Angeles, we see this first hand at our city's parks and it is unacceptable. Families in Los Angeles should be able to enjoy our RAP facilities without having to worry about their own personal safety. While arming our Park Rangers will not solve the problem in and of itself, it will be extremely helpful as we all work towards the common goal of having Los Angeles park facilities be as safe as possible for the people of Los Angeles.

It has never been more important to ensure that our Los Angeles first responders be granted the authority that comes with being a full-time law enforcement professional. The changing of Section 63.41 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code will grant the tools necessary to provide the level of service and protection that our park patrons, staff, and Park Rangers expect and deserve.

The United Firefighters of Los Angeles City are proud to support this motion by Councilmember Buscaino and we are asking you and the members of this committee to wholeheartedly do the same.

On behalf of the proud men and women of the Los Angeles Fire Department that I am honored to represent, I want to thank you in advance for your careful consideration of this matter. Feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions or comments regarding this request.

Sincerely,



Captain II Freddy Escobar
President
United Firefighters of Los Angeles City
IAFF Local 112

CC: Honorable Council President Nury Martinez
Honorable Joe Buscaino
Honorable Mitch O' Farrell
Honorable Curren Price
Los Angeles Police Chief Michel Moore
Chief Park Ranger Joe Losorelli
Deputy Mayor Jeff Gorell