

MONTEREY COUNTY



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March 8, 2021

The Honorable Eduardo Garcia
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 4140
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 868 (E. Garcia) Emergency services. – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblyman Garcia:

I write today on behalf of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors to express our support for AB 868 (E. Garcia).

The bill would create, in accordance with assistance that the Federal Emergency Management Agency, a statewide program to provide financial assistance to low-income individuals for the funeral expenses of an individual whose death is related to a state emergency. Providing State assistance to loved ones during a time of need, caused by a state emergency, should be subsidized for low income families who struggle with expensive funeral costs.

On March 4, 2020, Governor Newsom declared a State of Emergency as a result of the threat of a global pandemic related to the outbreak of COVID-19 in the State of California. For almost a year, Californians have been making significant adjustments to their everyday life with the intent to minimize the spread of COVID-19. To this date, over 50,000 Californians have died to COVID-19, unexpectantly leaving their family members, many of which are financially burdened, responsible for funeral arrangements. The median cost of funeral expenses is \$7,640, an amount almost impossible to pay. This pandemic not only has family members mourning the loss of a loved one, but also struggling to cover expenses, on an already constrained budget.

This bill would create a statewide program to provide financial assistance to low-income individuals, which equate to 18% of the state's population and account for a higher number of COVID-19 deaths in comparison to wealthier ones, to pay for funeral related expenses of an individual whose life has been lost during a declared state emergency, including the current COVID-19 pandemic. It would direct the California Department of Social Services to provide a one-time financial assistance of up to \$5,000 with a minimum of \$1,000 to low-income individuals (both citizens and nonresidents) – benefiting over 15,000 financially burdened Californians – whom have unexpectedly been burdened with the responsibility to pay for funeral expenses of an immediate family member whose death is attributed COVID-19.

For these reasons, Monterey County supports AB 868 (E. Garcia). Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Monterey's Public Policy Advisor, Ashley Walker of Nossaman LLP at 916-442-8888.

Sincerely,

DRAFT

Wendy Root Askew
Chair, Board of Supervisors

Cc: Hon. Anna Caballero, 12th Senate District
Hon. John Laird, 17th Senate District
Hon. Mark Stone, 29th Assembly District
Hon. Robert Rivas, 30th Assembly District
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)
Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC)