CSFA testifies in support of AB 2577; Controller race remains a nail-biter

With the state budget debates behind us, the day-to-day work of committee hearings continues as legislation moves through the Capitol. Last week, CSFA EMS Chair Scott Clough and I testified in favor of AB 2577 by Assembly member Ken Cooley (D – Rancho Cordova). This legislation would codify reimbursements to fire departments who provide medical transport to Medi-Cal fee-for-service or managed care beneficiaries.

Current law provides for the Medi-Cal program, which is administered by the State Department of Health Care Services, and under which qualified low-income individuals receive health care services. The Medi-Cal program is, in part, governed and funded by federal Medicaid Program provisions. Existing law authorizes certain ground emergency medical transportation providers to receive supplemental Medi-Cal reimbursement in addition to the rate of payment the provider would otherwise receive for those services. Existing law provides that participation in the supplemental reimbursement program by an eligible provider is voluntary, and requires the nonfederal share of the supplemental reimbursement to be paid only with funds from specified governmental entities.

AB 2577 would include, as eligible providers, those that provide ground emergency medical transportation to Medi-Cal fee-for-service or managed care beneficiaries. The bill would also authorize the governmental entities to include, as the nonfederal share of expenditures for ground emergency medical transportation services, and in collaboration with the department, voluntary intergovernmental transfers (IGTs) that conform with federal law. The bill would provide specific timeframes for the implementation of these provisions.

This bill would declare that it is to take effect immediately as an urgency statute.

Controller race still undecided

County election officials have been counting votes for three weeks in the race for California controller, and Democrat Betty Yee has gone from second place to third place, to fourth place and back to third. As of Tuesday afternoon, she was again clinging to second place, ahead of former Assembly Speaker John A. Pérez by a mere 865 votes. Whoever survives gets a spot in the Nov. 4 runoff against Republican Ashley Swearengin. When the final count is recorded a recount could be ordered.

But before any decisions are made on a possible recount, there are about 6,000 ballots to count in Lake County, where Pérez outpolled Yee by about seven percentage points in Election Day results. Diane Fridley, the Lake County registrar, said Tuesday that the office plans to process 5,263 vote-by-mail ballots Thursday morning and will sometime later deal with 743 provisional and 47 damaged ballots. The office will finish its work no later than next Tuesday’s deadline, said Fridley, who is on light duty following surgery and has only a skeleton staff to help with the ballot work.
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