

Attachment C

Senate Concurrent Resolution 192

AMENDED IN SENATE AUGUST 3, 2026

Senate Concurrent Resolution

No. 192

**Introduced by Senator Stern
(Coauthors: Senators Blakespear and Gonzalez)**

July 2, 2026

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 192—Relative to open water lifeguards.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 192, as amended, Stern. Open water lifeguards.

This measure would recognize open water lifeguards as first responders, in acknowledgment of their essential role in emergency response, public safety, and drowning prevention, as provided. ~~The measure would urge all California public agencies employing open water lifeguards to formally recognize them as first responders in their training frameworks, emergency planning documents, and mutual aid agreements, as provided.~~

Fiscal committee: ~~yes~~-no.

- 1 WHEREAS, California's open water lifeguards, employed by
- 2 various cities, counties, fire departments, harbor districts, park
- 3 districts, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and others, serve
- 4 and protect beaches and lakes across the state and conduct aquatic
- 5 rescues, respond to medical emergencies and traffic collisions,
- 6 execute tactical extrications, and more, all of which fall under the
- 7 tenets of a first responder classification; and
- 8 WHEREAS, The United States Lifesaving Association and the
- 9 California Surf Lifesaving Association document that, based on
- 10 statistics from 46 reporting California lifeguard agencies over the

1 past 26 years from 2000 to 2025, inclusive, California's open water
2 lifeguards have protected more than 4,500,000,000 patrons and
3 performed an astounding 96,022,795 preventative actions or
4 mitigating incidents, and effected 1,400,585 rescues; and

5 WHEREAS, Open water lifeguards are frequently the first
6 responders on scene, in addition to operating in tandem alongside
7 peace officers, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel, to
8 protect life, secure scenes, and preserve public safety until
9 additional responders arrive; and

10 WHEREAS, The duties of open water lifeguards extend beyond
11 aquatic rescue and include responding to emergencies on land,
12 including cardiac arrests, traumatic injuries, and motor vehicle
13 collisions occurring on or near beaches, parks, and public
14 roadways; and

15 WHEREAS, Open water lifeguards undergo rigorous and
16 continuous training, including high-performance cardiopulmonary
17 resuscitation, automated external defibrillator use, emergency
18 medical response, advanced rescue techniques, rescue watercraft
19 operations, and emergency scene management; and

20 WHEREAS, Open water lifeguards respond to emergencies by
21 attending to, treating, assisting, and transporting victims, which
22 collectively satisfy the four defined duties of an emergency
23 response employee under Section 300ff-133 of Title 42 of the
24 United States Code; and

25 WHEREAS, Open water lifeguards not only protect human life
26 but also safeguard property, preserve evidence, and protect the
27 environment, which together represent the four core tenets
28 commonly used to define a first responder; and

29 WHEREAS, In the performance of their duties, open water
30 lifeguards routinely place themselves at significant risk to their
31 own lives and physical safety in dynamic and hazardous ocean,
32 surf, and shoreline environments; and

33 WHEREAS, Lifeguards have given their lives in the line of duty
34 protecting the public on California's neighboring coastlines,
35 including Newport Beach ocean lifeguard Ben Carlson, who died
36 on July 6, 2014, while rescuing a distressed swimmer, a sacrifice
37 memorialized by the Ben Carlson Memorial and Scholarship
38 Foundation and honored by the lifesaving community statewide;
39 and

1 WHEREAS, In April 2026, the State of Hawaii adopted SR 54
2 and HR 42 recognizing open water lifeguards as first responders,
3 with zero dissenting committee votes; and

4 WHEREAS, The California Water Safety Coalition's California
5 Water Safety Strategy identifies lifeguards as a critical layer of
6 protection in drowning prevention and establishes an explicit
7 priority to create sustainable and adaptable systems for the
8 lifeguard workforce in California; ~~now, therefore, be it and~~

9 *WHEREAS, The Legislature recognizes the value of all*
10 *California public agencies employing open water lifeguards,*
11 *including, but not limited to, cities, counties, fire departments,*
12 *harbor and port districts, park districts, and the Department of*
13 *Parks and Recreation, formally recognizing open water lifeguards*
14 *as first responders in their training frameworks, emergency*
15 *planning documents, and mutual aid agreements, commensurate*
16 *with the scope and gravity of the duties those lifeguards perform;*
17 *now, therefore, be it*

18 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
19 *thereof concurring,* That the Legislature of the State of California
20 hereby formally recognizes professional open water lifeguards,
21 including, but not limited to, ocean lifeguards, lake lifeguards, and
22 all nonsworn open water lifeguard personnel employed by state,
23 county, municipal, and district agencies throughout California, as
24 first responders in acknowledgment of their essential role in
25 emergency response, public safety, and drowning prevention; and
26 be it further

27 ~~*Resolved, That the Legislature urges all California public*~~
28 ~~*agencies employing open water lifeguards, including but not*~~
29 ~~*limited to cities, counties, fire departments, harbor and port*~~
30 ~~*districts, park districts, and the Department of Parks and*~~
31 ~~*Recreation, to formally recognize open water lifeguards as first*~~
32 ~~*responders in their training frameworks, emergency planning*~~
33 ~~*documents, and mutual aid agreements, commensurate with the*~~
34 ~~*scope and gravity of the duties those lifeguards perform; and be*~~
35 ~~*it further*~~

36 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
37 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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