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Governor Signs Gipson Bill to Restore Police Powers at Local Ports

SACRAMENTO, Calif --- Governor Jerry Brown signed Assembly Bill (AB) 585 by Assemblymember Mike A. Gipson (D – Carson) which seeks to ensure that local port security officers are able to carry batons when performing their regular security duties.

“This is a common sense measure that will clarify the authority of the chief of a port to deputize and train security officers, which includes the right to possess appropriate weaponry," said Asm. Gipson. “The Port of Los Angeles and other ports around the state should be reasonably able to secure themselves with batons in the event of a criminal activity.”

Police security officers currently cannot arrest a person without a warrant or carry weapons to ensure public safety. Historically, the Los Angeles Port Police (LAPP) Chief has “deputized” their security officers, to carry batons. However, due to an interpretation of the law that designates this power for city police chiefs and county sheriffs only, the Los Angeles City Attorney determined that the chief of LAPP does not have this authority.

“The Port of Los Angeles thanks Assemblyman Gipson for his leadership in authoring AB 585, which closes a loophole in the California Civil Code and provides authorization for the Port’s Chief of Police to issue safety equipment, such as a baton, to a Los Angeles Port Police Security Officer,” said Los Angeles Port Police Chief Thomas Gazsi. “This legislation assists in keeping the nation’s busiest container port safe and secure.”

AB 585 extends “deputizing” authority to chiefs that operate independently of the city police department. By ensuring this power is explicitly provided in the law, the Port of Los Angles and other similar jurisdictions can exercise this power without there being any ambiguity in the law.

Mike A. Gipson represents the 64th Assembly District that includes the communities of Carson, Compton, Gardena, Harbor Gateway, Lynwood, North Long Beach, Rancho Dominguez, South Los Angeles, Torrance, Watts/Willowbrook and Wilmington.