



City of Encinitas

Office of
The Mayor

June 24, 2015

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 6012
Sacramento, CA 95814

Kristin Gaspar
Mayor

Re: AB 489 (Gonzalez) Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor Act
NOTICE OF SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Gonzalez:

Catherine S. Blakespear
Deputy Mayor

The City of Encinitas supports Assembly Bill 489 (Gonzalez) Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor Act. Your bill would add a 12th member that represents ocean lifeguards to sit on the Public Safety Medal of Valor Review Board, a group that reviews and recommends candidates to the Attorney General. The bill would also add ocean lifeguards to the list of public safety officers eligible to be considered for the Medal of Valor, California's top award in public safety to those who performed above and beyond the call of duty in public service.

Tony Kranz
Council Member

The City of Encinitas has six miles of beach and is the most popular attraction for visitors to our City. The knowledge and experience of our lifeguards help keep beach activities safe for visitors and residents alike. Ocean lifeguarding frequently places these safety officers in harm's way, contending with the forces of nature.

Mark Muir
Council Member

On July 6, 2014, 32 year-old Newport Beach Lifeguard Ben Carlson tragically lost his life in the line of duty. Ben entered the water and made contact with a swimmer in distress. During the rescue, the two were hit by a large set of waves estimated at 10' – 12'. Ben, believed to be knocked unconscious, was lost in the turbulent water conditions. The swimmer was assisted to safety by a body boarder in the area and was uninjured.

Lisa Shaffer
Council Member

Assembly Bill 489 will become more inclusionary of those who risk their lives every day to protect all of us in the state. For these reasons, our City supports adding ocean lifeguards to the list of eligible public servants for the Medal of Valor, alongside firefighters, law enforcement officers, corrections officers and emergency service officers.

Sincerely,

Larry Watt
Interim City Manager

Kristin Gaspar
Mayor

cc: Senator Patricia Bates
Assembly Member Rocky Chavez
California Marine Safety Chief's Association
City Council
Department of Fire and Marine Safety