



**UNITE
HERE!**



August 17, 2022

Governor Gavin Newsom
State of California
1021 O Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Secretary Mark Ghaly
California Health and Human Services
1600 9th St # 460
Sacramento, CA 95814

President pro Tempore Toni Atkins
California State Senate
1021 O Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Speaker Anthony Rendon
California State Assembly
1021 O Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Richard Pan
Chair, Senate Health Committee
1021 O Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assemblyman Jim Wood
Chair, Assembly Health Committee
1021 O Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Susan Talamantes Eggman
Chair, Senate Subcommittee No. 3
1021 O Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assemblyman Joaquin Arambula
Chair, Assembly Subcommittee No. 1
1021 O Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assemblyman Ash Kalra
Chair, Assembly Labor & Employment Committee
1020 N Street, Room 155
Sacramento, CA 95814
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Dave Cortese
Chair, Senate Labor, Public Employment,
& Retirement Committee
1021 O Street, Room 6740

RE: Elimination of Seismic Building Safety Standards – STRONG OPPOSTION

Dear Governor, Legislators, and Secretary Ghaly:

The undersigned unions, representing health care workers and health care consumers, write to reiterate our opposition to the repeated attempts by the California Hospital Association (CHA) to reverse decades of work to bring California hospitals up to adequate seismic building safety standards. CHA is asking the Governor and legislators to entirely exempt hundreds of hospital buildings in more than half the hospitals in California from the 2030 seismic standard designed to protect patients, the public and workers after earthquakes as well as a seven-year extension of the requirements for all hospitals.

Our unions strongly oppose trading wages for safety. It is a longstanding principle of the labor movement that unions support both higher minimum wages and strong safety standards for both workers and patients. We stand by that principle.

Since 1994, California law has provided two standards for hospital buildings: first, that hospital buildings are not at risk of collapse in an earthquake; with a deadline of the year 2020 for most hospitals, and second; a requirement that hospitals be fully functional to provide care after an earthquake by the year 2030. Unions have worked with hospitals in the past on specific, individual extensions based on the needs of the hospital. Over the years we have also met extensively with CHA on this issue but have not come to agreement.

Exempting hospitals from complying with the 2030 standard means that:

- As many as one out of four noncompliant hospital buildings would be unsafe to occupy after an earthquake.
- The remaining buildings would not be required to have functional electricity, water, sewage, or even elevators.

How is it possible to care for hospital patients without electricity? Or water? Or elevators? Or other basic utilities and mechanical systems. That is why the 2030 standards exist.

The proposed seven-year extension to the 2030 standard applies to **all** hospitals without regard for the fiscal health or progress toward compliance. The extension is far too long and would leave many communities unprotected and without access to care following a major earthquake. Considerable progress has been made over the past 47 years to ensure Californians can depend on hospitals for critical medical care in the aftermath of a major earthquake.

Hospitals have known about these seismic safety standards and requirements for decades and still have nearly seven years to bring any remaining buildings into compliance with the 2030 requirements.

Californians, workers who provide care in hospitals and those whose lives depend on hospitals being there for them, expect that their local hospital will be open and functional whether in a pandemic or in an earthquake.

Our unions support increase in the minimum wage: we oppose trading wages for patient safety. And we oppose exempting hundreds of hospitals from the requirement to be functional after an earthquake and to be able to care for the patients who are in the hospital when the earthquake happens and the patients who will be injured after an earthquake.

For these reasons, we are opposed to exemptions from the 2030 hospital standard and the seven-year extension.