September 16, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, Governor's Office
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1196 (Gipson) Peace officers: use of force
City of Beverly Hills – Request for Signature

Dear Governor Newsom,

On behalf of the City of Beverly Hills, I am pleased to write to you in SUPPORT of AB 1196 (Gipson) and respectfully request you SIGN this bill when it comes before your desk. This bill would prohibit a law enforcement agency from authorizing the use of a carotid restraint or a choke hold.

In the wake of the death of George Floyd and the subsequent nationwide protests police departments in several major cities, including the cities of San Diego and San Francisco, have taken steps to prohibit the use of carotid chokeholds as a means of subduing a suspect. The carotid restraint is one of the most commonly used strangleholds and is when a peace officer applies pressure on either side of the windpipe, but not on the windpipe itself, to slow or stop the flow of blood to the brain via the carotid arteries. While designed to render a subject unconscious when improperly applied or when a subject has an underlying physical condition such as coronary artery disease can make this form of restraint potentially lethal. In the case of Eric Garner, former New York City Police Commissioner James O’Neill said that the officer’s failure to relax his grip while subduing Mr. Garner with a carotid chokehold triggered a fatal asthma attack.

As we have seen time and again the use of carotid chokeholds can go terribly wrong, resulting in the deaths of suspects when applied incorrectly. There is no statewide policy regarding the use of carotid chokeholds the policies regarding their use can vary greatly between different law enforcement agencies. This can lead to confusion regarding their use as officers move from one department or agency to another.

For these reasons, the City of Beverly Hills is pleased to SUPPORT AB 1196 (Gipson). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lester J. Friedman
Mayor, City of Beverly Hills

cc: The Honorable Mike Gipson, 64th Assembly District
The Honorable Ben Allen, 26th Senate District
The Honorable Richard Bloom, 50th Assembly District
Andrew K. Antwih, Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange