

PRESS RELEASE

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Greig Smith Council District 12



LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCILMAN GREIG SMITH

Councilman Smith Denounces Union Scare Tactics

As a former volunteer Firefighter, and an LAPD Reserve Officer for nearly 20 years, I have the deepest respect for the men and women of the Los Angeles Fire Department who put their lives on the line every day to protect the safety of the citizens of Los Angeles.

However, I am very disappointed that the Union that represents our firefighters has engaged in a shameful campaign that exploits one of the worst tragedies that our community has ever experienced, the Chatsworth Metrolink train crash of Sept. 12, 2008. This tragedy took the lives of 25 people, injured 135 and traumatized our entire City.

The Union has sent thousands of graphic campaign-style mailers produced by professional political consultants to residents throughout the City. It is morally reprehensible that the Union has used actual crash-scene photos, showing blood-soaked sheets covering victims on the mailer.

I have personally asked the Union boss, Pat McOsker to present any solutions they might have to help resolve the budget problems while preserving public safety services. To date, he has offered none. The Union plans to go bang on the doors of residents in the same community that has already suffered so much to drum up fears.

I am deeply disappointed that the Union would use these kinds of tactics with such blatant disregard for the feelings of the families of the victims, who still have fresh wounds from this tragic event. This is particularly insensitive on the eve of the anniversary of the disaster, as the entire community prepares for the one-year memorial.

I know personally that many of the firefighters and public safety officers who responded to this disaster remain deeply affected, and would be saddened by this tragedy being exploited in a sleazy and misleading Union campaign.

The Union has engaged in this fight because of proposed funding cuts. As you know well, we are in one of the worst economic crises in our history and have made dramatic cuts to every City department including our own office budget. In spite of this, I remain committed to providing the highest level of public safety to the people who live and work in the City of Los Angeles.

In addition to their fear mongering, the Union is spreading misinformation and not telling the truth. I wanted to take the opportunity to present you with the facts:

- The proposed cuts will not close a single Fire Station.

- Every Fire Station will have a paramedic resource.
- Response times will remain under 7 minutes citywide.
- The entire reduction to the Fire Department is taken from **non-emergency overtime**.
- The Fire Department will not have a single layoff or furlough, unlike most City departments.

Public safety remains my top priority and I will continue to fight to make sure our Firefighters and Police Officers have all the resources they need to protect our neighborhoods, our businesses and our families.