Monday marked the beginning of a new two-year legislative session at the Capitol. While the country swung right, California swung left; far left. Democrats gained supermajority status in both the Assembly and Senate following the November election and Attorney General Harris easily won the U.S. senate race to replace Barbara Boxer.

Unlike past swearing-in ceremonies, this year’s lacked holiday spirit. With Monday’s swearing-in ceremony came fiery rhetoric aimed at the incoming presidential administration. Assemblymember Rendon, the Speaker of the State Assembly, and Senator Kevin de Leon, the Pro Tem of the Senate, used their welcoming speeches to make a commonly shared promise: to dedicate their terms to fighting the new administration on issues ranging from immigration to education and climate change.

Monday’s swearing-in ceremony also marked the first day for bills to be introduced. Three bills related to immigration were introduced on day one, reaffirming leadership’s commitment to making the issue a top priority this year. Cal Chiefs is reviewing the bills to determine if they would hurt public safety or our efforts to work collaboratively with our federal partners to prevent violence and terrorism. Another top priority of both houses will be bail reform, with both a Senate and Assembly bill being introduced stating that the Legislature intends to enact regulations to transition California away from a commercial bail system. We are developing a working group to study pretrial diversion and members interested in participating should contact Lauren Michaels at lmichaels@californiapolicechiefs.org.

Cal Chiefs’ sponsored legislation to allow law enforcement to use roadside oral fluid devices to detect the presence of drugs, AB 6, was also introduced on Monday, setting off a media flurry. AB 6 is one of many post-Prop 64 bills that we have committed to working on. A panel at the Capitol on Tuesday consisting of Cal Chiefs, the League of Cities, CSAC, Weedmaps, and the California Cannabis Industry Association highlighted the sharp divide between stakeholders on what “clean-up” is needed following the passage of Prop 64. Cal Chiefs will be working with local government and law enforcement associations to fight for local control, limits on market control, independent distribution, licensee vetting, advertising restrictions and tools to identify and reduce drugged driving. We hope to use the momentum built during the No on 64 campaign to push an organized legislative
effort to fight drugged driving. The Cal Chiefs’ team will be working with state and federal partners to identify accepted solutions to drug-impaired driving.

While much focus is on the outcomes of this November’s election, Cal Chiefs remains committed to resolving the many problems affiliated with Prop 47. Assemblymember Cooper was quick to introduce AB 16, which would allow for the DNA collection of crimes reclassified as misdemeanors under Prop 47. We look forward to working with his office and our law enforcement allies to ensure the bill’s passage. Fortunately, we have a strong ally. For the first time, the Pro Tem has been added as a co-author, signaling a commitment from leadership to assist in the bill’s passage.

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office.