

**MEMORANDUM
OF
UNDERSTANDING**

BETWEEN

**PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION
COUNTY EMPLOYEES**

(PUBLIC DEFENDERS)

UNIT 31

AND

THE COUNTY OF FRESNO

JANUARY 5, 2026 – JANUARY 3, 2027

UNIT 31

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ADDENDA:

INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE

We, the Undersigned, duly appointed representative of the County of Fresno, hereinafter referred to as "County" and Professional Association County Employees, Unit 31, hereinafter referred to as "Association", having met and conferred in good faith, do hereby jointly prepare and execute the following written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Representation Unit 31. It is the purpose of the MOU to promote and provide for harmonious relations, cooperation, and understanding between management and the employees covered herein and to provide an orderly and equitable means of resolving any misunderstandings or differences which may arise under this MOU.

SALARIES

- Step 6 effective July 8, 2024
- 1% increase effective January 5, 2026
- 2% increase effective June 22, 2026

<u>Classifications</u>	<u>Current Bi-weekly Salary Range</u>	<u>1% Increase Effective 01/05/26</u>	<u>2% Increase Effective 06/22/26</u>
Defense Attorney I	2980	3010	3070
Defense Attorney II	3478	3513	3583
Defense Attorney III	4173	4215	4299
Defense Attorney IV	4884	4933	5032
Senior Defense Attorney	5257	5310	5416

DUES AND DEDUCTIONS

The Association may have the regular dues of its bargaining unit members deducted from their paychecks under procedures as follows:

The Association is solely responsible for distributing to, and collecting from, employees the dues deduction authorization forms. It is the employees' responsibility to submit requests to start or stop dues deductions directly to the Association and not to the County. The Association is responsible for maintaining the dues deduction forms from individual employees. Copies of an individual employee's dues deduction authorization need not be provided to the County unless a dispute arises about the existence or terms of the authorization. Questions regarding Association membership, dues amounts, and payroll deductions must be directed to the Association and not the County.

The Association will provide to the County an updated, certified dues deduction list of bargaining unit members who have provided written authorization for regular dues deductions. The County will deduct dues for only those employees who are in the bargaining unit in accordance with such certified list. The Association will immediately notify the County of any change to an employee's dues deduction, including starting and stopping dues deductions, or validly cancelling or revoking a dues deduction authorization, and will promptly provide the County an updated certified dues deduction list noting any specific changes from the last list provided to the County. The County will implement the change(s) in the pay period following the County's receipt of such notification.

The Association shall indemnify, defend, and hold the County, its officers, agents, and employees harmless from and against any and all claims, demands, losses, defense costs, suits, or other action or liability of any kind or nature arising from this section, including, claims for or related to employee authorizations, revocations, deductions made, cancelled, or changed in reliance on the Association's representations and certifications regarding employee dues deduction authorizations.

This section of the MOU is not grievable.

RECOGNITION

Pursuant to the provisions of the Fresno County Employee Relations Ordinance, the certification of the Fresno County Civil Service Commission, and appropriate State law, the County hereby recognizes the Association as the exclusive representative of all employees whose classifications have been certified for inclusion by the Fresno County Civil Service Commission in Unit 31.

Should any classification be certified for inclusion by the Fresno County Civil Service Commission during the term of this MOU, the Employee Relations Ordinance, section 3.12.240 governs.

REPRESENTATION RIGHTS

The Association shall have the right to meet and confer in good faith with the County regarding wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment for representation Unit 31, within the scope of representation.

The scope of representation shall include all matters relating to employment conditions and employer-employee relations, including but not limited to wages, hours and other terms and conditions of employment, except, however, that the scope of representation shall not include the consideration of the areas enumerated as exclusive County rights in the Management Rights Article of this MOU.

RELEASE TIME

The Association may request that a reasonable number of employees, who serve as official representatives of the Association, be released from work, with prior department head approval, without loss of compensation when meeting and conferring with the County where matters within the scope of representation are being considered.

The Association shall submit a written request for release time to the department head, or designee, at least seventy-two (72) hours in advance of the meeting. The use of County time for this purpose shall not be excessive, nor shall it interfere with the performance of County services as determined by the department head.

BULLETIN BOARDS

The County shall provide space for and permit the installation of Association bulletin boards (or provide reasonable space on County bulletin boards) for official Association notices at each central work location. Such bulletin boards shall be maintained in accord with provisions of the County Employee Relations Ordinance.

No such bulletin boards shall be located in areas frequented by the public doing business with the County, as determined by the County.

MEETING PLACE

The County, at the Association's request, shall reasonably make available conference rooms and other meeting areas for the purpose of holding Association meetings during off-duty time periods provided space can be made available without interfering with County needs. The Association shall provide timely advance notice (48 hours) of such meetings. The Association also agrees to pay any additional cost of security, supervision, damage, and cleanup and shall comply with County regulations for assignment and use of such facilities.

REPRESENTATION IN COURT

Subject to all appropriate provisions of Government Code Sections, the County will, upon request of an employee or former employee, defend the employee against any claim or action for an injury arising out of an act or omission occurring within the scope of employment as an employee of the County and will pay any judgment based thereon or any compromise or settlement of the claim or action to which the County has agreed.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Each employee occupying a full-time, permanent position shall be eligible for paid Bereavement Leave up to twenty-four (24) working hours per bereavement for the death of a qualifying relative. Employees who work less than 80% of a full-time position shall be eligible for up to twelve (12) hours of paid Bereavement Leave per bereavement for the death of a qualifying relative.

All leave must be requested, approved and completed within six months of the qualifying relative's death.

A qualifying relative shall be defined as the employee's: legally recognized spouse, mother, step-mother, father, step-father, brother, step-brother, sister, step-sister, child, step-child (including California Health and Safety Code, Section 102950), grandmother, step-grandmother, grandfather, step-grandfather, grandchild, or step-grandchild. Also qualifying shall be an employee's corresponding relative through their legally recognized spouse: spouse's mother, spouse's father, spouse's brother, spouse's sister, spouse's child, (including California Health and Safety Code, Section 102950), spouse's grandmother, spouse's grandfather, or spouse's grandchild.

Employees granted Bereavement Leave shall only be paid for any work hours regularly scheduled but not worked. For example, an employee who regularly has Fridays off is not eligible to use Bereavement Leave on a Friday.

Employees must maintain active payroll status to be eligible for Bereavement Leave. Active payroll status is defined as receiving any type of pay from the County (e.g. Annual Leave, Sick Leave, Vacation). If an employee is not receiving any pay from the County, they are deemed to be on inactive payroll status and not eligible for Bereavement Leave (e.g. unpaid leave of absence). Employees may substitute Bereavement Leave for available Annual Leave when integrating with State Disability Insurance.

Employees may request use of Annual Leave when the employee desires additional time off for bereavement-related purposes. Approval by the Department of total Bereavement Leave hours permitted (including any additional Annual Leave requested) will be based on operational need.

Employees taking Bereavement Leave shall submit a written statement under penalty of perjury on the Leave Request and Certification Form.

HOLIDAYS

The dates listed below which fall within the normal workweek of Monday through Friday shall be considered paid holidays and shall be observed subject to provisions contained in the Salary Resolution:

- January 1 (New Year's Day)
- Third Monday in January (Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday)
- Third Monday in February (Washington - Lincoln Day)
- March 31 (Cesar Chavez Day)
- Last Monday in May (Memorial Day)
- June 19 (Juneteenth)
- July 4 (Independence Day)
- First Monday in September (Labor Day)
- November 11 (Veteran's Day)
- Fourth Thursday in November (Thanksgiving Day)
- Day following Thanksgiving
- December 25 (Christmas)

Every Monday following a Sunday which falls on January 1, March 31, June 19, July 4, November 11, or December 25

Every Friday when such Friday immediately precedes January 1, March 31, June 19, July 4, November 11, or December 25

SPECIALIZATION INCENTIVE

A Defense Attorney who completes certification through the California Bar as a Criminal Law Specialist shall receive \$274 per pay period in addition to his/her normal pay. Attorneys receiving the specialization incentive shall meet rigorous quality objective standards as determined by the California State Bar, as well as demonstrate a high level of competency as determined by the Department Head.

Proof of certification must be provided by the employee to Department management for verification. Upon the receipt of the Department's validation, payment may begin the following pay period.

PERFORMANCE ALLOWANCE – DEFENSE ATTORNEY II/III/IV/SENIOR

Performance Allowance: Defense Attorney II/III/IV/Senior who are demonstrating exemplary performance in a “specialized” assignment may receive an allowance as detailed below as determined by the Public Defender.

- Death Penalty Unit – \$400.00 per pay period
- Major Crimes Unit (Homicide & Sexual Assault) – \$300.00 per pay period
- Domestic Violence and Felony Unit – \$150.00 per pay period

Employees authorized to receive this allowance do so at the pleasure of the Public Defender and decisions designating or removing designation for the performance allowance are not grievable, appealable or subject to challenge in a court of law. Furthermore, no more than fifty-six (56) employees may receive this allowance per pay period.

The Public Defender shall budget funds to pay this performance allowance from year to year and shall only expend these funds for the purpose stated herein.

COMPUTER PROGRAMMING MODIFICATIONS

Notwithstanding any language in this MOU to the contrary, the respective articles of this MOU which will involve modifications to existing computer programs of the County shall not become effective until the beginning of the payroll period following the completion of such modifications. Furthermore, the provisions of this article shall not be used to extend the effective date of salary changes.

MANAGEMENT RIGHTS

- A. All County rights, powers, functions, and authorities except as expressly abridged by this MOU shall remain vested in the County whether or not they have been exercised in the past.
- B. No portion of this County Management Rights Article shall be construed to obligate the County in any way.
- C. All decisions made in accordance with County Management Rights which are established in this section or are inherently existent shall not be subject to any aspect of the grievance procedure or unfair employee relations practice charges.
- D. This article is not intended to nor may it be construed to modify the provisions of the Charter relating to Civil Service or personnel administration. The Civil Service Commission shall continue to exercise authority delegated to it.
- E. This article is not intended to modify those rights which have been granted to employees in this MOU following procedures specified in Government Code Sections 3500 *et seq.*
- F. In the exercise of its rights, the County shall not require an employee to perform an act or acts contrary to licensing law.

- G. This article is not intended to restrict consultation with the Union at the request of the latter regarding matters within the right of the County to determine.
- H. The rights, powers, and authorities of the County include, but are not limited to, the sole and exclusive right to:
 - 1. Determine the mission of its constituent departments, commissions, boards, and committees;
 - 2. Set standards of services and evaluate the County's effectiveness in delivery of these services;
 - 3. Determine the procedures and standards for employee selection, promotion, demotion, transfer, reassignment and/or layoff;
 - 4. Select, train, direct, assign, demote, promote, layoff, dismiss its employees;
 - 5. Communicate fully and openly with its employees on any subject at any time orally, in writing, both at work or through the U.S. mail;
 - 6. Take disciplinary actions;
 - 7. Relieve its employees from duty or reassign employees because of lack of work or for other reasons the County considers legitimate;
 - 8. Evaluate and maintain the efficiency of County operations;
 - 9. Determine and change the method, means, personnel, and standards by which County operations are to be conducted;
 - 10. Determine the content of job classifications;
 - 11. Take all necessary actions to carry out its mission in emergencies including the suspension of portions or all of this MOU for the period of emergency as determined by the County;
 - 12. Exercise complete control and discretion over its organization and the technology to perform its work;
 - 13. Make rules and regulations pertaining to employees consistent with this MOU;
 - 14. Make all financial and budgetary decisions;
 - 15. Establish, allocate, schedule, assign, modify, change and discontinue work shifts and working hours and workweeks;
 - 16. Contract, subcontract, establish, merge, continue or discontinue any function or operation of the County;

17. Engage consultants for any future or existing function or operation of the County;
18. Order overtime.

CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS

Continuous and uninterrupted service to the citizens of the County, and orderly employee/employer relations between the County and its employees are essential considerations of this MOU. Therefore, the Association agrees on behalf of itself and those County employees which it represents both individually and collectively, that there shall not be any strikes, picketing, boycotting, work stoppages, sitdowns, sickouts, speed-ups, slow-downs, or secondary action such as refusal to cross picket lines or any other concerted refusal to render services or to obstruct the efficient operations of the County or refusal to work, including refusal to work overtime, or any other curtailment or restriction of work at any time.

The County shall not utilize a lock-out technique in its employee/employer relationships.

BAR DUES

The County of Fresno shall pay directly to the State Bar of California, Bar Dues for each employee covered by this MOU. The County of Fresno shall not pay for any Attorney Specialization Bar Dues nor Section Membership fees. Employees shall submit their fee statements to the Public Defender's Office no later than thirty (30) days prior to the due date shown on the fee statement to allow for timely processing and payment.

Employees who do not submit their fee statement at least thirty (30) days prior to the due date shall be required to pay their Bar Dues directly to the State Bar of California. The County shall, upon request, reimburse these employees for their payment of Bar Dues providing that the request for reimbursement is made in the current fiscal year (June 30). The employee shall be responsible for any penalties and fees that may be assessed as a result of failure to pay Bar Dues timely.

BILINGUAL SKILL PAY

The Director of Human Resources, in consultation with County Department Heads, will designate certain languages as eligible for bilingual certification, based on operational need. Bilingual assignments and allocations are subject to approval by the County Administrative Office (CAO's Office).

Employees who may be eligible for Bilingual Skill Pay will be certified to determine their proficiency in the specified language. Once the employee is bilingual certified through the proficiency exam, Bilingual Skill Pay will be granted upon Department Head approval and the employee's assignment to a qualifying position.

Tiers of Bilingual Certification:

1. All employees certified for any type of Bilingual Skill Pay shall be minimally certified to the County's Basic Bilingual Proficiency Requirement (BPR). Employees who currently meet the Bilingual Pay requirements, shall be grandfathered into the BPR pay effective upon implementation of this agreement.

2. A department may create and operate an Advanced BPR (ABPR) based on operational needs subject to approval by the Director of Human Resources. Employees who currently meet the Bilingual Pay requirements, shall be grandfathered into the ABPR pay effective upon implementation of this agreement through January 1, 2027.
 - a. Operational Need is defined as a critical need for linguistic skills where terminology or education is rapidly evolving and may result in potential misdiagnosis, degradation of service delivery with implications for injury, and where lacking advanced skills may cause a department to be unable to comply with statutory or contractual mandates (i.e., grant terms and conditions for cultural competency).
 - b. On presentation to, and approval by, the Director of Human Resources, each Department Head may contract with a specialized vendor with competency in advanced written and oral testing for each specified language.

Each ABPR will be outlined in written form and communicated to all employees who may be eligible for the program, along with any period of recertification, as applicable.

Bilingual Proficiency Examinations and Certification Process:

1. Bilingual skills are certified to meet the County's Basic and Advanced Bilingual Proficiency Requirement (BPR) through a formal examination process administered by an approved vendor with a specialty in bilingual examinations. Employees shall not be required to recertify unless:
 - a. They have a break in County service; or,
 - b. The department for whom they are hired and perform bilingual duties, as defined, has a department-led bilingual recertification and training program known as an ABPR.
2. Employees may submit a written request to their department personnel unit to be considered for bilingual certification. The department head or designee shall have authority to accept or reject the request for certification and may authorize the employee for assignment to either the County BPR level, or at the ABPR level provided that the department has an active and approved ABPR.

ABPR certification shall only be pursued by a department once the employee has been certified to the County BPR.

Employees may be tested and certified without being assigned to work in a Basic or Advanced Role. Only personnel who meet all conditions of the Position Designation/ Eligibility clause of this article are eligible for the related pays.

3. The department shall be responsible for bilingual examination through the appropriate vendor at the department's own expense. Employees will be released on County time and travel and vehicle use shall be in accordance with Management Directive (MD) 500 (Travel) and MD 900 (County Automotive Transport). Time in transit to and from testing sites shall be County time.

4. Employees that fail the certification exam, shall have the ability to retest once more without a secondary written request to the department. If an employee fails a second time to become certified, then they may request another examination for either level of competency by submitting another written request to their department. Upon receipt of the written request, the department will review its operational needs and provide a written response to the employee within ten (10) business days. All tests approved and subsequently conducted after the second failure shall be at the employee's expense, save that travel and testing time is still County time and that said travel complies with the MD's referenced above. If, after the second failed test, an employee is directed by management to retake the exam, the department shall cover the exam costs. An employee's eligibility to retest at the County's expense resets one year after their second failed test.

Position Designation/Eligibility:

Employees may be eligible to receive Bilingual Skill Pay when all the following conditions are met:

1. The position is designated as eligible for Bilingual Skill Pay by the employee's department head or their designee and as allocated by the CAO's Office at one of the following levels:
 - a. BPR – The employee demonstrates and uses the ability to converse and translate orally to/from English to/from the second language.
 - b. ABPR – The employee demonstrates the ability to converse, read, write, and translate (orally and in writing) to/from English to/from the second language and the department has an approved ABPR. The employee must regularly demonstrate the use of said language(s). The employee is at least annually recertified to meet the department's advanced need for currency in industry jargon or in response to funding mandates or other statutes requiring such repetitive certification.
2. Upon certification, qualifying employees will be designated as qualified at BPR or ABPR; and,
3. The employee is assigned by their department to use the skill.

Bilingual Skill Pay Effective Date:

For Bilingual Skill Pay to take effect, the position must be designated at either BPR or ABPR, and the employee must be certified to the corresponding level. Bilingual Skill Pay shall be effective the pay period subsequent to all conditions being met and cannot be applied retroactively.

Pay Provisions:

1. Bilingual Skill Pay shall be paid in the following amounts:
 - a. BPR - \$60.00 per pay period
 - b. ABPR - \$100.00 per pay period

2. Exception: Bilingual Skill Pay shall not be paid when the entire pay period consists of annual leave and/or unpaid leave.
3. Employees shall only be paid the highest rate (i.e. paid for ABPR over BPR) for which they are certified – and which the department authorizes and assigns them – and shall only receive payment for one language, regardless of the number of languages for which they are certified. The BPR and ABPR rate may not be combined in any manner.
4. If the employee transfers, demotes, or promotes to a position that is not designated as bilingual, they will no longer be eligible for Bilingual Skill Pay. Likewise, an employee transferring, demoting, or promoting to a position which is eligible for Bilingual Skill Pay will be eligible only for the level and rate authorized for said position. The County shall make every effort to place a BPR or ABPR qualified and practicing employee in a position also already qualified and allocated for a BPR or APBR. Former certification and pay will have no bearing on the new position and rate.

SAVINGS CLAUSE

The provisions of this MOU are declared to be severable and if any section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of this MOU shall for any reason be held to be invalid or unconstitutional, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining sections, sentences, clauses and phrases of this MOU, but they shall remain in effect, it being the intent of the parties that this MOU shall stand notwithstanding the invalidity of any part. Should any portion of this MOU be found invalid or unconstitutional, the parties will meet and confer to arrive at a mutually satisfactory replacement for the portion found to be invalid or unconstitutional.

FULL UNDERSTANDING

It is intended that this MOU sets forth the full and entire understanding of the parties regarding the matters set forth herein, and any other previous understanding or agreements by the parties (with the exception of addendums and sideletter agreements), whether formal or informal, regarding any such matters are hereby superseded and terminated in their entirety. With respect to addendums and sideletter agreements, all previously existing addendums and sideletter agreements that have not expired, and addendums and sideletter agreements entered into during the term of this MOU shall continue in force subject to the terms and conditions set forth within each. Further, neither party shall be bound by any promise or assurance that is not explicitly covered in this MOU, addendum or sideletter agreement signed by both parties.

This MOU shall govern in case of conflict with provisions of existing County ordinances, rules and regulations pertaining to wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment, but otherwise such ordinances, rules and regulations shall be effective and the Board of Supervisors and other County Boards and Commissions retain the power to legislate pertaining to such matters subject to compliance with the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act and other applicable provisions of law provided such actions are not in conflict with the provisions of this MOU.

EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

The Employee Grievance Procedure and Forms agreed to on December 18, 2017, shall be available on the Human Resources website. No changes shall be made to the procedure and/or forms without mutual agreement of the Association and County.

EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION SYSTEM

The Employment Protection System agreed to on December 18, 2017, shall be available on the Human Resources website. No changes shall be made to the procedure without mutual agreement of the Association and County.

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

The County and the Association agree that it is in the best interest of both parties and the best interest of the County employees that all employees be informed of these rights.

The County agrees that every employee who is subject to an administrative investigatory interview by management will be given a copy of their Weingarten rights and a form to indicate if he/she wishes to invoke his/her Weingarten Rights. The employee will be given time to read the form and mark if he/she wishes to have a representative in the meeting. Employees have the right to request that a representative be present at any investigatory meeting when the employee reasonably believes that disciplinary action might result from the investigation. The employee will then sign the form and be given a copy of the signed form.

This article shall not be grievable or appealable, except for the employee's right to appeal if their Weingarten rights are violated.

ANNUAL LEAVE

All employees covered by this MOU will participate in Annual Leave as governed by Fresno County Salary Resolution, Section 600.

LAYOFF

Layoffs and reemployment from the layoff list shall be based on seniority-only provisions of Personnel Rule 12.

TIER V GENERAL RETIREMENT PLAN (PEPRA) – MANDATORY

Pursuant to the California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013 ("PEPRA;" AB 340, GC §§7522 et seq), any employee newly hired into a permanent position who will become a new member of FCERA on or after January 1, 2013, shall be enrolled in the State mandated defined benefit retirement formula specified in Government Code § 7522.20 and will be subject to all other retirement plan provisions as mandated by PEPRA. This state mandated retirement tier shall be known as the Tier V General Retirement Plan.

Consistent with PEPRA, the exception to being enrolled into General Tier V for any employee who will become a new member of FCERA on or after January 1, 2013, is an individual who was previously employed by another public employer and was able to establish reciprocity with FCERA as specified in § 7522.02(c). In the case of reciprocity being established, the new employee would be enrolled into General Tier IV.

Any employees hired prior to January 1, 2013, should contact FCERA to obtain information regarding their retirement tier and benefits.

The foregoing information is only for the parties' general reference.

HEALTH INSURANCE

1. Effective January 5, 2026, the County will contribute up to, on behalf of each full-time (.8 or higher FTE) up to the following amounts per pay period based on the employee's plan selection:

<u>Plan Selection</u>	<u>Total Contribution</u>
Employee Only	\$473
Employee plus Child(ren)	\$778
Employee plus Spouse	\$778
Employee plus Family	\$963

2. If during the term of this agreement the State or Federal government legislates mandatory benefit levels in excess of those covered by agreement between the County and health/dental plan(s) which results in increased premiums, either the County or the employee organization may request the other party to meet and confer regarding the terms and conditions set forth herein.
3. Pursuant to the HBAC agreement, the parties agree to continue to meet and discuss the County's health benefit program before the commencement of each Plan Year.

TEN (10) YEAR RETENTION PAY

Effective July 10, 2023, employees within the Defense Attorney I/II/III/IV/Sr classification series shall be eligible to receive a 5% retention premium pay differential upon completion of 10 years of continuous satisfactory County service within the classification series, as defined in Salary Resolution Sections 410.1 and 410.2 and upon recommendation of the employee's Department Head. This differential would not reset upon promotion up through the Defense Attorney series.

MOU REOPENERS

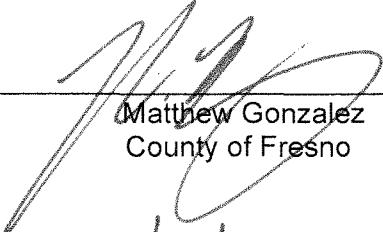
The parties agree to a one time only re-opener regarding salary for Defense Attorney I/II/III, to commence on or about March 2026.

The parties agree to a re-opener regarding health insurance contributions for Plan Year 2027, on or around September 1, 2026.

TERM OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND RENEGOTIATION

This MOU shall be in effect from January 5, 2026, through January 3, 2027. Negotiations for the successor MOU shall begin on or about September 1, 2026.

COUNTY OF FRESNO

By 

Matthew Gonzalez
County of Fresno

Date: 12/16/2025

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION COUNTY EMPLOYEES - UNIT 31

By 

Regina Chessari - Unit 31
Professional Association County Employees

Date: 12/16/2025