

Chair and Members of the committee,

My name is Tim Scott and I have been employed as a Public Safety Telecommunicator, also known as a 911 Dispatcher for almost 11 and a half years. I am currently employed by the Harney County Sheriff's Office and live in Harney County.

I hold Basic, Intermediate and Advanced Certificates as a Telecommunicator as well as a Basic Emergency Medical Dispatcher Certificate with the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training. I am here this morning to ask for your support of SB 425 and SB 426. As many of my fellow telecommunicators have already said in provided written testimony on these 2 very important bills, we are the **First, First Responders.**

I previously worked as a Telecommunicator in Deschutes County prior to my current position in Harney County. I took a break of 12 years in between the two agencies. Due to this break, I was blessed with the opportunity to attend the police academy in both Monmouth and Salem 21 ½ years apart. I am the recipient of the Carol Fagan Academic Award and Victor G Atiyeh Outstanding Student award in 1997 and the Victor G Atiyeh Outstanding Student award in 2019 as well.

During my time with Deschutes County, I had 2 calls that have stuck with me for my entire dispatching career. I heard some of the last words that 2 people would ever speak prior to them dying. Both tragically. One was a nurse in Bend who was kidnapped by an ex-boyfriend at gunpoint while I was on the phone with her. She died shortly after that when the ex-boyfriend shot and killed her before turning the gun on himself. The other was a gentleman who was calling in a traffic complaint and had a medical emergency while on the phone with me and subsequently crashed his car into a tree while I was still on the phone with him.

Both of these calls will remain with me for the rest of my life. They will never go away and I have learned to live with that. I shared those tragic moments with both of them, because I am a Dispatcher. I don't do this job entirely for the pay. Yes, it helps to support me and my family of two incomes. But we all do this job because we are here to help others.

In Harney County, I am the only dispatcher in this county of 10,228 square miles for 12 hours at a time. My other 3 Telecommunicator colleagues who help me cover this county 24/7 are in this approximately 14 foot by 14 foot room stuffed with cameras, radios, computers, printers and file cabinets. We have a bathroom that is conveniently across the hallway that we sometimes have to run and hope that no one calls or talks on the radio when nature calls. We have to use our Corrections Deputy that works in the jail beside us often if we need longer breaks. We and the Jail deputies are the only Public Safety personnel that are on duty 24/7. I just recently transferred to a day shift after a little over 2 years of working nights. The additional PERS benefits would very much be appreciated by all of my fellow Telecommunicators across the state. I think that being able to retire with full benefits after 25 years of service is the least we can do to show our debt to these caring individuals who have given so much for their communities.

We are a vital link between the public and Law Enforcement, Fire and EMS services that they desperately need in their worst days. We provide lifesaving pre arrival instructions before EMS can arrive, we attempt to diffuse volatile situations by being a calm voice to our callers and we watch over our Law Enforcement, Fire and EMS brothers and sisters during their daily duties as well. We are all part of the Emergency Services Profession. We are held to the utmost Professional and Ethical standards and should be recognized as First Responders as well. 2 years ago, My Class at the Oregon Public Safety Academy in Salem chose "Never Seen, Always Heard" for our Class motto. I think this is a large reason why Public Safety Telecommunicators aren't often thought of as First Responders.

Thank you for your time today.