

Submitter: Jennifer Ariel

On Behalf  
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Emergency Management, General  
Government, and Veterans

Measure: HB2701

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Attention: The Honorable Chair Grayber, Vice-chairs Lewis and Tran, and members  
of the Committee

On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans,

Re: Written testimony in support of Measure HB2701

My name is Jennifer Ariel and I have worked as a 911 Telecommunicator/Dispatcher in Clackamas County since October 2013. I have been the definition of a first responder for nearly 10 years; a person, with specialized training who is among the first to arrive and provide assistance or incident resolution at the scene of an emergency, such as an accident, disaster, medical emergency, structure fire, crime, or terrorist attack. I do this all by phone. The definition of a first responder, one that would describe that of a firefighter/paramedic, and law enforcement personnel. The difference being we aren't able to physically respond to the scene, instead we sit with anticipation, sitting in our adrenaline hoping our callers receive the help that need, praying our deputies get that cover unit in time. It is said that the average person who experiences a critical incident or traumatic event in their life, about 2 or 3 in their lifetime. Law enforcement/first responders could experience up to in surplus of 180 critical incidents in their career. Each time I answer the phone it's usually to talk to someone going through their worst moments, this taking only a few minutes of my time. I take on someone else's trauma, someone's life changing event nearly every 5 minutes of my 12 hour shift. I don't know the outcome, I don't get the closure, and I don't get to jump through the phone to help, just listen and wait. There are several reasons that I support HB2701, from the seen/unseen medical, emotional, and mental strain, to the burdens this job puts on a telecommunicators family. The day to day things we encounter through the phone aren't things we 'leave at work', they stay with us forever.