



February 5, 2024,

Chair Grayber, Vice-chairs Lewis and Tran, and members of the Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans,

For the record, my name is Fred Yungbluth and I am a 911 dispatcher in Clackamas County and I am also the council wide president for Oregon AFSCME. I want to thank you for letting me share part of my story today and urge your support for the Public Safety Workforce Stabilization Act of 2024 or HB 4045. I have worked as a 911 dispatcher for 25 years, 18 years in Clackamas County and 7 years in Ohio, and as I'm sure you are aware, we are facing an extreme staffing crisis with hundreds of failed recruitments into positions like mine across the state. With the marked change in the workforce since COVID, the workforce has steered away from caregiving jobs that ask workers to work shift work, weekends and holidays, let alone a high



stress job that will impact you. With that change, it has been increasingly difficult to get candidates to even apply and those who do apply up to 75% wash out of the pretesting before even getting to an in interview

Oregon's 911 professionals are the most important people that the public will never see. As a vital lifeline between the public and responding public safety forces, 911 dispatchers and telecommunicators fill the chasm between the chaos described by callers and the responders by experiencing constant attacks on our psyche of constantly being asked to do more with less- by being described as not worthy of other high stress public safety jobs. However, in other public safety fields there is always more assistance available to quell whatever emergency or disaster the state faces. For example, if there is a large fire, command just asks for more fire engines and firefighters until they can get the fire out but due to technological limitations 911 workers in the state are bound by the



number of workstations funded at their center and cannot simply ask for more assistance. Another, unique quality for 911 versus the rest of the public safety family, is we have no option but answer every call. Further, 911 professionals are tasked with being the only by being the integral step in getting help to emergencies throughout the state.

In the matter of minutes, we can go from the distinct inconsolable and irreplicable wail of a mother finding their child dead, to answering an annoyed neighbor complaining about someone's grass being too high to being thrust back into a caller being beaten in domestic violence. This concentration of stress of high impact calls along with no closure to nearly all incidents differentiates 911 professionals with a unique public safety experience that should be protected to retain the talent Oregon already possesses and while recruiting a sustainable and healthy workforce for the future. Our injuries may not show to the public but the mental strain and break is a real thing



911 Dispatchers play a vital role in ensuring that Oregonians get access to the services they need when they're in a dangerous situation. We need to ensure that the workforce across the state stays while recruiting new talent.

Thank you and I hope you and the rest of the commission support this Public Safety Workforce Stabilization Act of 2024.