

Professional Fire Fighters of North Dakota

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Senate Finance and Taxation Committee

Chairwoman Bell and members of the Finance and Taxation Committee,

My name is Darren Schimke. I am the President of the Professional Fire Fighter of North Dakota representing 415 professional firefighters across the State of North Dakota. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in favor of HCR 3028.

911 dispatchers are literally THE front line of the emergency service system. No matter the type of emergency, they provide information, guidance, support and updates as the emergency unfolds and develops. This flow of information is constantly being relayed to the responding entities. With that, they must deal with levels of internal stress and odd work hours daily.

I have observed first-hand the internal struggle that the 911 center has with recruitment and retention. The passage of this bill will assist 911 Directors across our State with attracting qualified individuals that will remain with the Centers long term.

As I reflect back on the beginning of my career with the Grand Forks Fire Department, we performed our own dispatch. The 911 call came directly to the department and we self-dispatched. There is no doubt in my mind that the level of service to our citizens has improved to levels that can't be relayed into words. It's simply remarkable!

They deserve to be included as qualified public safety employees and not subject to the early distribution tax under the IRS retirement provision.

We appreciate your consideration of a Do Pass recommendation and hope that you will support HCR 3028 with us.

Darren Schimke