

Professional Fire Fighters of North Dakota

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Senate State and Local Government Committee

Re: Support of HB 1419

Madam Chair Roers and members of the Senate State and Local Government Committee.

My name is Darren Schimke, President of the Professional Fire Fighters of North Dakota representing 420 professional firefighters throughout the State of North Dakota. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1419.

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.

Emergency medical services personnel endure high stress emergency situations multiple times each day. The mental challenges can be very taxing at times.

As I reflect back on the beginning of my career with the Grand Forks Fire Department in 1993, 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!

911 dispatchers and emergency medical services personnel deserve eligibility into the PERS Public Safety Plan.

The Professional Fire Fighters of North Dakota respectfully request a Do Pass of HB 1419.

Darren Schimke