



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

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April 6, 2020

The Honorable Rudy Salas
State Capitol, Room 4016
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1945 (Salas) – First Responders: Public Safety Dispatchers – **SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Salas:

Humboldt County is pleased to support Assembly Bill (AB) 1945, which will redefine Public Safety Dispatchers or Public Safety Telecommunicators as First Responders, recognizing the highly skilled and heroic work of the individuals who are often the first to answer the call during an emergency.

Public safety dispatchers play a vital role in emergency response, which extends far beyond just dispatching calls for peace officers and firefighters. Dispatchers are often responsible for being the first to respond to an accident or emergency. California is home to approximately 6,160 emergency dispatchers who answer over 27 million 9-1-1 calls in a year, with an additional 28,000 emergency text messages.

Currently, the Federal government classifies public safety dispatchers as, “Office and Administrative Support Occupations” which typically describes jobs like file clerks. This classification is inaccurate and does not acknowledge the vital contribution of dispatchers to the emergency response chain in California.

Public safety dispatchers are highly trained individuals and routinely communicate with people in great distress, including during active shooter situations. Dispatchers can coach callers through first aid, collect information to provide situational awareness for responding officers, and negotiate in hostile situations.

It is important that public safety dispatchers be recognized for their vital contribution to the safety and security of California by classifying them as first responders.

We strongly support AB 1945 because public safety dispatchers are the first to answer the call during an emergency and deserve to be classified as first responders. By redefining public safety dispatchers as first responders, California will be making a clear statement that recognizes dispatchers for the life-saving work that they perform heroically every day.

Sincerely,

Estelle Fennell, Chair
Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

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