

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

WRITTEN
TESTIMONY ONLY

**Testimony COMMENTING on HB0073 SD1
RELATING TO EMERGENCY WORKERS**

**SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
SENATOR GILBERT S.C. KEITH-AGARAN, VICE CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

Hearing Date: 4/6/2021

Room Number: Videoconference

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure may impact the priorities identified in the Governor's Executive
2 Budget Request for the Department of Health's (Department) appropriations and personnel priorities.
- 3 **Department Testimony:** The Department supports this measure.
- 4 Under Hawaii Revised Statutes Title 10 §128D Environmental Response Law, a State On-Scene
5 Coordinator is designated by the Hawaii Director of Health as authorized by the Governor to
6 coordinate and direct State emergency response actions to hazardous substance release incidents
7 throughout the State. Hazardous substance(s) include chemical, oil, medical waste, radioactive and
8 biological materials, or pollutants and contaminants that cause or pose a threat to human health
9 and/or the environment. State On-Scene Coordinators work in-the-field alongside hazardous material
10 firefighter, law enforcement officer, or any other emergency response personnel in an environmental
11 emergency response incident.
- 12 Hawaii State Hospital telephone operators conduct the same roles and responsibilities of a County
13 telecommunications dispatcher such as obtaining concise important information from a caller,
14 analyzing the information given and accurately communicating the information to the appropriate
15 recipient in a time-critical manner.
- 16 **Offered Amendments:** None
- 17 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

STATE OF HAWAI‘I
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER
Testimony of the Office of the Public Defender,
State of Hawai‘i to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

April 6, 2021

H.B. No. 73 HD2, SD1: RELATING TO EMERGENCY WORKERS

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

The Office of the Public Defender **opposes** H.B. No. 73 HD2, SD1.

This measure expands HRS § 707-700 by including additional qualifying occupations to the definition of an “emergency worker” to the ever-growing number of occupations which have been singled out for special protection against assaults in the normal course of their employment. The expansion of this definition will directly impact the offense of Assault Against an Emergency Worker, in violation of HRS § 707-712.7. This statute elevates a misdemeanor assault to a class B felony.

While we understand the desire to carve out special protections for certain classes of individuals who are assaulted in the normal course of their employment, this measure is just another example of the expansion of misdemeanor level assaults to felony level assaults -- *not* based on the act itself but based on the job description of the victim. Over the years, this list of qualifying occupations has steadily grown to include many special categories and specific occupations.

It is our position that *all* employees should feel safe as they go about performing their requisite duties. As we have cautioned in the past, with the passage of time, more and more special categories and occupations will be added to this list. As the list grows, additional employees and groups will be asking themselves whether they should request special consideration and be included for special protection.

The flood gates of special protection requests are already open as each year we see the growing list of special employment categories to the assault statute elevating a simple misdemeanor assault to felony level status. We urge caution and we ask the Legislature to reevaluate the necessity for this measure and the necessity of expanding this ever-growing list. It is no small matter to be thrust into Circuit Court to face a felony charge for actions that would be treated as a misdemeanor in most other situations.

Enhancing the penalties (i.e., elevating a misdemeanor offense to a Class B felony) will not keep 911 operators, on-scene coordinators and state hospital operators safer, will not deter crime, and will only serve to fuel mass incarceration. Data and research show that increasing the severity of punishment does little to deter crime. Laws and policies designed to deter crime by focusing mainly on increasing the severity of punishment are ineffective.¹ Not only do more severe punishments not deter crime, but longer periods of incarceration exacerbate recidivism.² The consequences of a felony criminal conviction are far-reaching and pose barriers to reentry long after a sentence has been served. These collateral consequences make it far more difficult to find employment, housing, and seek higher education and are not limited to individuals; they are experienced by families and communities, for generations to come.³

Finally, enhanced penalties have additional consequences that harm communities in the long run and fuel mass incarceration. Our jails and prisons are filled above not only design capacity but also operational capacity. A significant portion of the State's prison population are incarcerated in a contracted private, for-profit prison in Arizona; they are exiled thousands of miles away from their families, friends and crucial support networks. According to a recent study by the Prison Policy Initiative, in 2018, Hawai'i had an incarceration rate of 487 per 100,000 people.⁴ Although Hawai'i ranked 37th among the 50 states, if every state were an independent nation, Hawai'i would have the 43rd highest incarceration rate in the world.⁵ Only three foreign countries have a higher incarceration rate than

¹ National Institute of Justice, "Five Things About Deterrence." See <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/five-things-about-deterrence>

² Prison Policy Initiative, "Recidivism and Reentry." See https://www.prisonpolicy.org/research/recidivism_and_reentry/

³ Prison Policy Initiative, "Out of Prison & Out of Work: Unemployment among formerly incarcerated people." See <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/outofwork.html>

⁴ Prison Policy Initiative, "Hawaii profile." See <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/HI.html>

⁵ Prison Policy Initiative, "States of Incarceration: The Global Context." See <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2018.html>

Hawai‘i.⁶ Thus, Hawai‘i locks up a higher percentage of its people than many wealthy democracies do.⁷

We all want safe workplaces and to feel protected and secure. Violence against any employee threatens that, and we have a responsibility to stop, prevent, and condemn violence in any form. But expanding HRS § 707-700 and enhancing penalties for conduct based on the job description of the victim and not the act does not do that. There are already adequate laws that ensure that those who compromise 911 operators, on-scene coordinators, and telecommunications dispatchers’ safety are penalized.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

⁶ Id.

⁷ Prison Policy Initiative, “Hawaii profile.” See <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/HI.html>

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2021 9:45:36 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

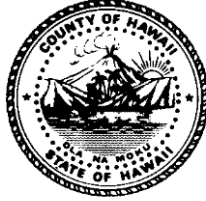
Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Victor K. Ramos	Testifying for Maui Police Department	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly urge you all, our Legislature, to pass this bill.

They already live up to this title, "Emergency Worker." Such a designation will bring a lot of pride to this very special class of First Responders.

Mitchell D. Roth
Mayor



Paul K. Ferreira
Police Chief

Kenneth Bugado, Jr.
Deputy Police Chief

County of Hawai`i

POLICE DEPARTMENT

349 Kapi`olani Street • Hilo, Hawai`i 96720-3998
(808) 935-3311 • Fax (808) 961-8865

April 1, 2021

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz
Chairperson and Committee Members
Committee on Ways and Means
415 South Beretania Street, Room 211
Honolulu, Hawai`i 96813

RE : HOUSE BILL 73, HD 2, SD 1, RELATING TO EMERGENCY WORKERS
HEARING DATE : APRIL 6, 2021
TIME : 9:30 A.M.

Dear Senator Dela Cruz:

The Hawai`i Police Department **strongly supports** House Bill 73, HD 2, SD 1, with its purpose to amend the definition of "emergency worker" in the Penal Code to include communications dispatchers.

I am very familiar with our department's Dispatch Communications Center and have direct knowledge of the expectations placed on Dispatchers. Dispatchers are considered the truest first responders because they answer every emergency call before Police, Fire or Medical personnel are dispatched. They are solely responsible for calming hysterical callers, who are going through what might be the worst moments of their lives. While maintaining their composure and multi-tasking, Dispatchers must quickly and accurately obtain critical information and dispatch Police, Fire and/or Medical services to the caller. The Dispatcher's actions and ability to obtain accurate information are pivotal to the First Responders, which can greatly impact the outcome of the response.

Their roles are intertwined with that of the First Responders because of the additional support services provided to the Responders throughout the duration of each call. As a result, their roles and responsibilities are clearly graver than that of non-emergency dispatchers both in the enormity and complexity of work that they are called upon to perform.

It is for these reasons, we urge this committee to approve this legislation. Thank you for allowing the Hawai`i Police Department to provide comments relating to House Bill 73, HD 2, SD 1.

Sincerely,

PAUL K. FERREIRA
POLICE CHIEF

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2021 1:35:04 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nolan Nip	Testifying for Honolulu Fire Department	Support	No

Comments:

I STRONGLY support to include Hawaii state on-scene coordinators and communications dispatchers as definition of emergency workers. As a Hazmat Company Officer in the Honolulu Fire Department in response to Hazardous Materials emergencies, we rely on the on-scene coordinators assistance in mitigation efforts. I can personally attest to incidents where if not for the response and support of the on-scene coordinator, mitigation of the incident would have extended unnecessarily committing HFD resources that could be available for response.

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2021 3:37:03 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
annamarie shannon	Testifying for honolulu police dept	Support	No

Comments:

I have been an Emergency Response Operator/Supervisor for 30 years. We are the answering point for the 911 system. We are the first operators to receive the 911 calls for Non Emergency Police, Police Emergency, Ambulance, Fire, Crisis Center, Poison, and outer Island PSAPS. We work 24/7, 365 days a year.

I humbly ask for your support on HB73.

Thank you for allowing me to submit my testimony, Your support is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Annamarie Shannon

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2021 4:32:15 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
dtaba@honolulu.gov	Testifying for Honolulu Police Department	Support	No

Comments:

I have 28 years of service as a 911 Emergency Response Operator I. I am the first to answer calls for the various different agencies, such as police, fire, ambulance, suicide and crisis and poison control. Upon gathering the callers information, all calls must be passed to the different agencies in a timely manner.

Thank you for supporting this bill.

Sincerely,

EROI Diana Taba

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2021 3:30:28 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
LORIANNE ITO	Testifying for HPD	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Lorianne Ito and I am a Police Communications Officer II for the Honolulu Police Department and I am in support of this bill.

Thank you.

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2021 3:34:03 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Minuette Kaiuwailani	Testifying for Honolulu Police Department	Support	No

Comments:

I work for the Honolulu Police Department as a Police Communications Officer, and I am in support of this bill.

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2021 3:47:29 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
AMBER WELCH	Testifying for Honolulu Police Department	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Amber Welch. I work for the Honolulu Police Department as a Police Communications Officer and I support this bill.

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2021 4:22:20 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lora De Leon	Testifying for Honolulu Police Department	Support	No

Comments:

I work as a Police Communications Officer for the Honolulu Police Department and am in support of this bill.

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2021 8:01:57 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Darrell Hee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I Captain Darrell Hee of the Honolulu Fire Department / Hazmat 2 apparatus ,

Support Bill HB73 HD2 SD1.

The DOH HEER OSC Responds to Hazardous Materials Incidents anytime we need them for their Help and Expertise in Mitigation through Disposal of any Hazardous Material Incidents in the State of Hawaii 24 hours a day, 7 days aweek.

So Yes they are Viewed as an Emergency Worker since they respond and advise the Honolulu Fire Department at Hazardous Material Incidents.

LATE

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2021 10:17:45 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Michael Lam	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair

and Committee Members

Committee on Judiciary

415 South Beretania Street

Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

RE : HOUSE BILL 73, HD 2 SD 1, RELATING TO EMERGENCY WORKERS

I **strongly support** House Bill 73, HD 2, with its purpose to amend the definition of "emergency worker" in the Penal Code to include communications dispatchers.

As an 18-year employee of the Hawai'i Fire Department as a fire fighter, a paramedic, and an officer in the EMS Bureau, I have worked extensively with our Fire dispatchers on all emergency and non-emergency incidents. A critical and quick thinking skillset is imperative as a first responder to ensure effective operations of the emergency workers tending to the sick, the injured, and bystanders. All telecommunications dispatchers have the same skillset as they are the first recipients of critical emergency information. They process, filter, and relay invaluable information in real time to responding personnel.

As a member of Hawai'i Fire Department's Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team, I have witnessed firsthand that our telecommunication dispatchers share the same stress, depression, and emotional scarring that all first responders deal with

involving critical incidents. This alone validates my strong support in classifying our communications dispatchers as emergency workers under HRS 707-700.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 73, HD 2, SD 1.

Respectfully Submitted,

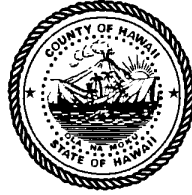
Michael Lam

Fire Medical Specialist III

Hawai'i Fire Department

Mitchell D. Roth
Mayor

Lee E. Lord
Managing Director



Robert R.K. Perreira
Acting Fire Chief

County of Hawai'i
HAWAI'I FIRE DEPARTMENT
25 Aupuni Street • Suite 2501 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720
(808) 932-2900 • Fax (808) 932-2928

April 1, 2021

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz
Chairperson and Committee Members
Committee on Ways and Means
415 South Beretania Street, Room 208
Honolulu, HI 96813

LATE

RE: HOUSE BILL 73 Relating to Emergency Workers
HEARING DATE: April 6, 2021
TIME: 9:30 am

Dear Senator Dela Cruz:

The Hawai'i Fire Department strongly supports House Bill 73, which amends the definition of "emergency worker" in the penal code to include communications dispatchers.

Telecommunication dispatchers are an integral part of our response to emergency operations. They are truly the first responder for each and every 911 call. Dispatchers are tasked with calming any situation, obtaining vital information, staying composed, multi-tasking, delivering lifesaving directions and dispatching emergency units. This all happens prior to any response by Police, Fire or Medical personnel. This is truly "emergency work".

In Hawai'i County, the Hawai'i Fire Department dispatcher is also trained and certified in Emergency Medical Dispatching (EMD). EMD allows for critical lifesaving task to be communicated to the 911 caller such as the proper placement of an unconscious victim, how to open an airway, and even CPR instructions. These types of critical tasks are the type of emergency work our communication dispatchers do twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

The Hawai'i Fire Department respectfully requests this committee to approve this legislation and we thank you for allowing us to provide testimony related to House Bill 73.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Perreira".

Robert R.K. Perreira
Acting Fire Chief



HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2021 3:19:22 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
SusanEgdamin	Testifying for Maui County Police Dept	Support	No

Comments:

Please support HB73 to acknowledge Emergency Service Dispatchers and Supervisors. I have been a part of this profession for 30 years and 10 months. Over the years this job has become overwhelmingly the highest art of multi-tasking. Technology has not only improved finding callers, technology also gives us tools to provide pre-arrival instructions to save a person's life. While we are performing these task with the caller, EMS, Fire and Police radios don't stop and wait for a dispatcher to finish the call, other emergencies don't stop. These same disciplines have their own emergencies and often this same dispatcher is talking to the caller while also talking to the Medic, Fire or Police units that are responding to the same incident.

This may be hard to imagine by words alone. I implore you to visit a 911 center, listen to the numerous emergencies happening at the same time and watch how one dispatcher navigates several different computers and see what role these computers are to the dispatcher and the responders. These are lifesaving equipment that each person must have extensive training on.

Each Dispatcher goes through intense training. From learning to identify problems, to entering the call into the computer, being sure the location is accurate and the right resources being sent, while at the same time talking with the often hysterical or uncooperative caller, trying to give pre arrival instructions to help their love one. These action are "First Responders". Many of these medical calls say "What do I do, help me please."

This is a high stress, complex and more often rapid succession job. We are not "Clerical Workers", we are "Emergency Workers", our job requires handling of time sensitive situations, saving lives and supporting our EMS, Fire and Police personnel. We may not see them, but they are our sisters and brothers and we are all working for the safety and health of our community.

Sincerely,

Susan Egdamin

Maui Police Department/Communications Section

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2021 2:40:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jeff Riewer	Testifying for E911 Board	Support	No

Comments:

To whom it may concern....

I am currently a standing board member on the state Enhanced 911 board and I support this legislation. I also wanted to give a brief testimony on behalf of the numerous call takers and dispatchers that work throughout the state of Hawaii. 7 years ago I was in a severe motorcycle accident. I was lying on the side of the road and within minutes first responders were at my aide. If it weren't for the competent and knowledgeable people behind the dispatch tables I may not be here today. I wanted to thank each and everyone of them. They are continually put on the spot, must have superb critical thinking skills, and be able to multi task across different monitors and systems. They are to be appreciated for the jobs they do. Passing this bill is just one step in that positive direction. Thank you.



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-First Legislature, State of Hawaii
The Senate
Committee on Ways & Means

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

April 6, 2021

H.B. 73, H.D. 2, S.D. 1 – RELATING TO EMERGENCY WORKERS

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports the intent of H.B. 73, H.D. 2, S.D. 1 which amends the definition of “emergency worker” to include communications dispatchers and on-scene coordinators. We appreciate the amendments from the Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs to increase the inclusiveness and recognition of additional employees.

H.B. 73 appropriately adds telecommunications dispatchers, including police, fire, and emergency medical dispatchers, on-scene coordinators, and Hawaii State Hospital telephone operators to the definition of an emergency worker in the penal code under Section 707, Hawaii Revised Statutes. The inclusion of telecommunications dispatchers not only recognizes the efforts of our hard-working dispatchers who handle crisis situations at all hours of the day, but also honors their invaluable role as the unsung heroes in every emergency. Dispatchers must utilize multiple life-saving procedures and technologies to obtain critical information from a caller to make lightning fast decisions that could be the difference between life and death for our families and neighbors and deserve this recognition.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 73, H.D. 2, S.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director

Thursday, March 26, 2021

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Representative Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Representative Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Support for H.B. No.73 HD2 SD1, Relating to Emergency Workers.

H.B. No.73 HD2 SD1 will amend the definition of “emergency worker” in the Penal Code to include Hawaii state on-scene coordinators and dispatchers.

Emergency dispatchers are the first point of contact in most all emergency situations. They are the liaison between on-scene first responders, the public, and other emergency workers. Emergency dispatchers directly serve the public community and should be considered emergency workers.

Given the on-going adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, dispatchers have seen an immense increase in the number of mental health related crisis situations. As a service provider for at-risk adolescents, I have seen first-hand the essential role that dispatchers play in suicide-related emergencies. These positions are fast-paced and trying, which calls for dedicated, empathetic, and selfless individuals to step into these roles. Dispatchers and on-scene coordinators are emergency workers who diligently work to create a safer community for us all.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of H.B. No.73 HD2 SD1.

Taylor Kirk

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2021 10:30:52 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Loren Kahakua	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a public servant of the County of Hawaii, Big Island, for 5 years, as a telecommunications Fire Dispatcher with the Hawaii [County] Fire Department, I support the Proposed HB#73 concerning the amendment of the definition of emergency workers to include communication dispatchers who in the course of their duty have to utilize a multitude of skill sets in order to ensure the situation is addressed as expediently and efficiently as possible. Our dispatch center is a fast paced, high stress environment and handles crisis situations at all hours of the day. I am the eyes and ears for the first responders and at times have to make lightning fast decisions that could be the difference between life and death. I am a nationally certified Emergency Medical Dispatcher who is highly trained and disciplined to ask the right questions to properly assess the situation and communicate vital information to the responding units and provide verbal medical direction to callers needing emergency services which includes guiding callers through the process of performing CPR and delivering babies. In doing so, I carry a lot of liability. I also manage all calls for emergency help during severe weather (ex: Hurricane Lane), natural disasters (ex: Leilani Lava Eruption) and ballistic missiles which I know Secretaries in our current bargaining unit do not do; And I share the responsibility to serve the public with professionalism and Aloha. I humbly ask the Honorable Representatives for your support. Thank you very much.

Loren Kahaku

P.O Box 306

Mountain View, HI 96774

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2021 5:42:38 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dean M. Rickard	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Honorable Senators and Representatives,

RE: HB 73, HD2, SD1 – Relating to Emergency Workers

Telecommunication Dispatchers, otherwise known as Emergency Services Dispatchers (ESD), are our true “first responders” in all facets involving critical life-saving situations on a daily basis. They are the first to be called upon when our citizens are impacted by an emergency, and the first to document information for every emergency call taken.

HB 73 represents a significant shift in the way we should recognize the important work that our Telecommunication Dispatchers do on a daily basis in providing emergency services to our community. While the majority of their efforts are conducted behind the scenes – such as answering & processing 9-1-1 calls; dispatching and deploying emergency services personnel; or, managing critical radio communications and information – all too often these efforts are discounted.

The Telecommunications Dispatcher’s role is vital to the effective delivery of emergency services and must be accomplished in a collaborative effort with other emergency service workers. The daily demand of a Telecommunication Dispatcher is definitely comparable to any emergency service worker. This proposed legislation acknowledges this critical link that Telecommunication Dispatchers have in the delivery of emergency services within our community and would also enhance much needed recruitment and retention efforts within this career field.

I fully support and strongly urge the favorable passage of HB 73 as a step in the right direction to duly recognize Telecommunication Dispatchers as emergency service workers.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully,

Dean M. Rickard

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2021 9:44:27 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bob Harter	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support for H.B. No.73 HD2 SD1, Relating to Emergency Workers.

I strongly support H.B. 73, to amend the definition of “emergency worker” to include Hawaii State On-Scene Coordinators (SOSC).

I respectfully request your support to pass H.B 73 to recognize Hawaii Department of Health, Hawaii State On-Scene Coordinators as “emergency workers”.

Hawaii Department of Health On-Scene Coordinators serve as the Department of Health’s primary representative to coordinate and direct emergency response actions at a hazardous substance release or spill incident alongside First Responders (i.e. firefighters, police, emergency medical service, etc.) and the responsible party. They are physically present and on-scene of the multiagency response. Remember hazardous substance(s) include chemical, oil, medical waste, radioactive and biological materials, or pollutants and contaminants that cause or pose a threat to human health and/or the environment. They are on-call to respond to hazardous substance, under emergency and austere conditions 24/7 every day of the year for our safety and protection.

As you may have read or heard in earlier testimony “...the general public may not be aware that most environmental emergency responses (oil spill or chemical spill responses; land and sea) fall under the direct oversight and/or direction of a Hawaii State On-Scene Coordinator (SOSC). Called to duty at any time 365 days a year in an emergency capacity, the SOSC brings State authority and judgment to emergency response sites throughout the State of Hawaii. While working with other public and private responders, the rapid but thought out decisions of the SOSC can make the difference between a controlled emergency response and an environmental disaster. Given their duties, it seems virtually impossible to exclude an SOSC’s position from the realm of an Emergency Worker.”

I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony, supporting H.B. 73.

Please pass this bill.

Thank you

Robert H-H Harter

Kaneohe, HI 96744

April 1, 2021.

Honorable Senators and Representatives,

Re: **I support HB 73**, amending the definition of “emergency worker” in Section 707-700, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

I have been a firefighter for the County of Hawaii these past 16 years and I support the proposed HB 73 concerning the amendment pertaining to the definition of emergency workers to include communication dispatchers who in the course of their duty have to utilize a multitude of skill sets in order to ensure the situation is addressed as expediently and efficiently as possible.

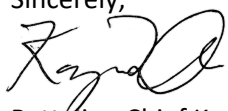
Our dispatch center is a fast paced, high stress environment and handles crisis situations at all hours of the day. The job of a dispatcher has rapidly changed over the last decade from a person who answers a phone to get an address for response to a specialist who wears multiple hats. Some of the things they have to do include:

- Operating a multi-line telephone console system, alerting system, and TDD system for the deaf and hearing-impaired
- Determining and assigning the level of priority of the call and enter the data into a computer-aided dispatch system
- Performing emergency medical dispatch and crisis intervention services
- Asking vital questions and provide pre-arrival instructions for emergency medical calls
- Monitoring and operating a radio console and various computer equipment
- Receiving and responding to a variety of emergency and non-emergency services and complaints
- Asking questions to interpret, analyze and anticipate the caller’s situation as to resolve problems, provide information, dispatch emergency services, or refer callers to other agencies
- Dispatching and coordinating the responses of public safety agencies
- Identifying appropriate number and type of equipment or apparatus to dispatch

Training for their position lasts for over a year. The attrition rate is horrendous in every dispatch center in the State of Hawaii. The responsibility, level of expectation, stress and difficulty of the job are excessive. If any position deserves to be considered an emergency responder dispatchers definitely fall within that category.

Thank you very much for allowing me to submit testimony. Your support of this bill is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Battalion Chief Kazuo Todd
Hawaii Fire Department

April 1, 2021

Honorable Representatives,

Re: **I support HB73 HD2 SD1**, Section 707-700, Hawaii Revised Statutes, amending the definition of “emergency worker”.

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary an emergency is “an unforeseen combination of circumstances or the resulting state that calls for immediate action.” As a public servant of the County of Hawaii, Big Island, I have experienced many emergencies where I was the ‘first responder’ to the public requesting help for a medical or fire emergency.

As a public servant of the County of Hawaii, Big Island, for **14** years, as a telecommunications Fire Dispatcher with the Hawaii [County] Fire Department, I support the Proposed HB73 HD2 SD1 concerning the amendment of the definition of emergency workers **to include communication dispatchers who in the course of their duty have to utilize a multitude of skill sets in order to ensure the situation is addressed as expediently and efficiently as possible.**

Our dispatch center is a fast paced, high stress environment and handles crisis situations at all hours of the day. I am the eyes and ears for the first responders and at times have to make lightning fast decisions that could be the difference between life and death. I am a nationally certified Emergency Medical Dispatcher who is highly trained and disciplined to ask the right questions to properly assess the situation and communicate vital information to the responding units and provide verbal medical direction to callers needing emergency services which includes guiding callers through the process of performing CPR and delivering babies. In doing so, I carry a lot of liability. I also manage all calls for **emergency** help during severe weather (ex: Hurricane Lane), natural disasters (ex: Leilani Lava Eruption) and ballistic missiles which I know secretaries in our current bargaining unit do not do. With the recent pandemic with COVID-19, there have been an increase in medical emergencies and my fellow co-workers are doing a great job taking the influx of emergency calls.

I humbly ask the Honorable Representatives for your support.

Thank you very much for allowing me to submit testimony. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

RICHARD P. ARIAS

P.O. Box 7419

Hilo, HI 96720

Email: richard.arias@hawaiicounty.gov

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2021 10:06:01 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
HARLEY NOBRIGA	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I consider 911 dispatchers/calltakers to be first responders. The work load we take and due is similar to those that have the title. we are required to go to work during an emergency where the rest of the people are instructed to stay indoors or seek shelter. We work side by side with officers to ensure they get to the people & get all the pertinent information needed. We stay on the line to calm people down during high stressed induced incident such as robbery, getting shot, getting their house broken into while they are home. We make sure that officers can get to them & the peoples voices and concerns are heard. We are the middlemen & women within the department. We are the unheard voices of the people & we deserve to be considered as a first responder

Wednesday, March 31, 2021

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: **In support of HB 73, HD2, SD1**, RELATING TO EMERGENCY WORKERS: Amends the definition of "emergency worker" in the Penal Code to include Hawaii state on-scene coordinators and communications dispatchers

As a public servant of the County of Hawaii, Big Island, for **21** years, as a telecommunications Fire Dispatcher with the Hawaii [County] Fire Department, I support the Proposed **HB 73, HD2, SD1** concerning the **amendment of the definition of emergency workers to include communication dispatchers** who in the course of their duty have to utilize a multitude of skill sets in order to ensure the situation is addressed as expediently and efficiently as possible.

Our dispatch center receives calls for Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Fires, Rescues and Hazardous Materials. It is a fast paced, high stress environment and handles crisis situations at all hours of the day. We are the eyes and ears for the first responders and at times have to make lightning fast decisions that could be the difference between life and death. We are nationally certified Emergency Medical Dispatcher who are highly trained and disciplined to ask the right questions to properly assess the situation and communicate vital information to the responding units and provide verbal medical instructions to callers needing EMS. Our duties and responsibilities include guiding callers through the process of performing infant/child/adult CPR and Childbirth delivery. As well as, determining when to administer Aspirin, when/how to administer Narcan/Naloxone and Epi-pen, as a lifesaving measure before First Responders arrive. We also receive emergency calls for water and land search/rescues (which include ocean and river rescues, boat rescues, lost/injured hikers/hunters/persons, extrication rescues down cliffs and ravines), hazardous material spills/releases, and fire emergencies (which include residential, commercial, and high life/hazard structures, fire alarms, vehicles, brush), just to name a few. We also manage emergency calls during severe weather (ex: Hurricane Lane), natural disasters (ex: Leilani Lava Eruption) and ballistic missiles. The recent Coronavirus Pandemic required the ability to quickly adapt and incorporate verbiage to include safety assessments/instructions for the safety of our personnel, as well as the public. These above mentioned duties are not duties of Unit 13 – clerical/secretaries. Our daily duties carry a high liability. We humbly take on the responsibility to serve the public with professionalism and Aloha.

I humbly ask for your support of this bill. And, thank you very much for allowing me to submit testimony. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully,

SANDEE K OZEKI

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2021 3:02:09 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sally Crowder	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am Police Communication Officer II for the Honolulu Police Dept. I am in support for this bill HB73. Thank you.

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2021 4:16:06 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Alexander	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in full support of HB73 that would recognize the State of Hawaii Department of Health On-Scene Coordinators (OSC) from the Hazard Evaluation **Emergency** Response Office (HEER) to be recognized as emergency workers. I am a Fire Captain with the Honolulu Fire Department assigned to one of two Hazmat units. I have called upon their expertise regarding emergency incidents involving hazardous materials many times. On large incidents, they have responded to the emergency site personally to provide guidance regarding hazmat incidents involving multiple agencies, multiple jurisdictions, and environmental laws. They provide 24/7 assistance to the Honolulu Fire Department and other fire departments across the state. Fire Captains on Hazmat units can contact the OSCs for support via phone, email, or on-site assistance any time of the day. The HEER Office hosts quarterly meeting of the Hawaii State **Emergency** Response Commission (HSERC) that representatives from State, Clty, and NGO attend to discuss hazmat issues and responses throughtout the State and abroad.

In closing, the State On-Scene Coordinators (OSC) should be recognized as Emergency workers. The office they work out of, Hazard Evaluation **Emergency** Response (HEER) office and the commission they belong to, Hawaii State **Emergency** Response Commission (HSERC) already has **Emergency** in their names. It makes total sense!

Note: I just called the OSCs for their assistance on 3/31/21.

Mahalo!

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2021 2:26:05 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jessica LM Lafaele	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As an active employee of the Honolulu Police Department Communications Division, I **support** this bill to recognize Police Communications Officers (Police Radio Dispatchers) as Emergency Workers. **Police Communications Officers have to utilize a multitude of specialized training and skill sets in order to ensure the situation is addressed as expediently and efficiently as possible.** We are a unique group of emergency workers that must under go the same lengthy background checks and scrutiny as Honolulu police officers during the hiring process; (less the physical fitness test police must pass).

Thank you for your time. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Jessica LM Lafaele

HPD Police Communications Officer II

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2021 2:47:49 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
chivas soon	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As an active employee of the Honolulu Police Department Communications Division, I support this bill.

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2021 5:53:02 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David Cook	Individual	Comments	No

Comments:

I am respectfully requesting that you pass HB73. Hawaii State On-Scene Coordinators are the State Department of Health's in-the-field emergency workers for environmental emergencies such as chemical and oil releases. Statewide, they work with value added alongside each of the County's emergency response personnel.

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2021 7:08:51 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kimberly Lee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am supporting HB73 HD2 SD1. My name is Kimberly Lee, I am a Police Communications Officer II with 26 years of service. Throughout my years of service I have reported to work on weekends, holidays, during natural disasters and other major events in our City. We still go in to work even when there is an expected Tsunami. When other State and City employees are told to go home or stay home because of bad weather HPD Communications Division employees are not given the same treatment because we are considered essential. I was working on District 3 Radio when we had the emergency for the missile attack. I remember thinking of my kids but I cant leave, i have a responsibility and will be needed for all the emergency calls for help we will receive. None of us working that day left our positions. I feel we should be recognized as emergency workers because of our dedication to protecting and serving the community. We answer calls for help with parking issues, fight calls, people wanting to hurt themselves, people scared someone is in their home and calls that are horrendous and heartbreaking. Not only do we answer calls from the public but we also work the police radios to assist our officers. We communicate with them if they need assistance, give them important information on the calls we send them to respond to, assist in critical incidents and send help to people in need. This is just a small example of our dedication to answer emergency and non emergency calls for help 24 hours a day every day.

HB-73-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2021 4:40:44 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/6/2021 9:30:00 AM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Laura Casey	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I fully support that Fire Radio Dispatchers or any Dispatchers that work in the capacity of all emergency services - fire, rescue, hazmat and emergency medical calls be included as part of the definition of an emergency worker. They are of the utmost importance as they are the first contact made in an emergency call and the very essence of a frontline emergency worker. Any exclusion of their profession would diminish their value to the emergency worker team. Our community already recognizes this and depends on this. Your favorable consideration is necessary to establish security in all areas of public safety. Although I also work in the Fire Department, I speak from my point of view as a concerned citizen in my community.