

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



KENNETH S. HARA
MAJOR GENERAL
ADJUTANT GENERAL

STEPHEN F. LOGAN
BRIGADIER GENERAL
DEPUTY ADJUTANT GENERAL

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
KA 'OIHANA PILI KAUA
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
3949 DIAMOND HEAD ROAD
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96816-4495

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL NO. 1398

RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

BY

EVERETT S. KANESHIGE

STATEWIDE INTEROPERABILITY COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

February 14, 2023

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett and members of the committee:

My name is Everett Kaneshige, and I am the Statewide Interoperability Communications Coordinator with the Office of Homeland Security at the State Department of Defense. Thank you for the opportunity for our office to submit testimony in **SUPPORT** of H.B. 1398.

911 emergency services dispatchers play a vital role in partnership with their in-the-field first responder colleagues including police, firefighters, emergency medical services and other public safety personnel. Often these individuals face situations where individuals are in a great amount of distress, harm, fear, or injury.

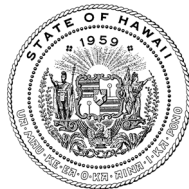
Currently, 911 emergency services dispatchers are usually classified as an office and administrative support occupation. This measure will allow these individuals to collectively bargain as a separate group and is an important step so they may be recognized for the important and specialized functions that they perform daily and allow them to receive the compensation and benefits commensurate with their duties and responsibilities.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT** of H.B. 1398.

Frank J. Pace, Administrator, Office of Homeland Security, Hawaii Department of Defense, frank.j.pace@hawaii.gov, 808-369-3570.

Everett S. Kaneshige, Statewide Interoperable Communications Coordinator, Office of Homeland Security, Hawaii Department of Defense, everett.s.kaneshige@hawaii.gov, 808-460-8005.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
Ka 'Oihana Mālama Mo'ohelu a Kālā
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

TESTIMONY BY LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 1398

February 14, 2023
9:30 a.m.
Room 309 and Videoconference

RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

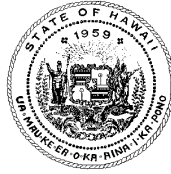
The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

This bill creates a separate bargaining unit (BU) 16 for State and county telecommunications and emergency dispatchers and other telecommunications dispatch personnel while leaving the rest of the current BU 3 and BU 4 employees in the existing BUs.

The Legislature has created two new BUs in recent years and is considering creating others, in addition to this one, this session. There are concerns with the increasing administrative costs and complexities, negotiating, arbitrating, and managing of contracts for every increasing number of BUs.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

JOSH GREEN, M. D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



BRENN A H. HASHIMOTO
CHIEF NEGOTIATOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR
KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
235 S. BERETANIA STREET, SUITE 1201
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2437

Statement of
BRENN A H. HASHIMOTO
Chief Negotiator, Office of Collective Bargaining

Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
Tuesday, February 14, 2023
9:30AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

In consideration of
HB 1398, RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and the members of the committee.

The Office of Collective Bargaining (OCB) appreciates the intent of HB 1398, which allows telecommunications and emergency dispatchers and employees who perform similar functions employed by the state and counties to collectively bargain. However, we must respectfully oppose this measure.

The OCB is concerned for the following reasons:

1. OCB believes that separating telecommunications and emergency dispatchers and employees who perform similar functions employed by the State is not necessary, as the current collective bargaining agreement addresses wages, hours, and other conditions of work.
2. The current bargaining unit (BU) representing the telephone and emergency dispatchers, BU 3, is comprised of a wide variety of clerical and technical jobs, not just clerks. Pursuant to §89-6, HRS, BU 3 covers "Nonsupervisory employees in white collar positions." For example, it includes tax returns examiners, human resources technicians, eligibility workers, and x-ray technicians, just to name a few.
3. A study was conducted pursuant to Act 63, Session Laws of Hawaii 2021, to review existing classification and compensation schedules for telecommunications and emergency dispatchers and other similarly situated employees. The review found that these employees were properly classified and assigned to the appropriate salary ranges in their bargaining unit.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and comments on this measure.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

650 SOUTH KING STREET, 10TH FLOOR • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 768-8500 • FAX: (808) 768-5563 • INTERNET: www.honolulu.gov/hr

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR



NOLA N. MIYASAKI
DIRECTOR

FLORENCIO C. BAGUIO, JR.
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

February 13, 2023

The Honorable Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
The Honorable Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair
and Members of the Committee on Labor & Government Operations
The House of Representatives, Room 309
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and Members of the Committee:

SUBJECT: House Bill No. 1398
Relating to Collective Bargaining

House Bill No. 1398 allows telecommunications and emergency dispatchers and employees who perform similar functions employed by the State and counties to collectively bargain and recategorizes these employees into a new bargaining unit 16.

The City and County of Honolulu ("City"), Department of Human Resources (DHR), respectfully **opposes** this measure.

The City's Joint Traffic Management Center (JTMC) is the main emergency dispatch and communications center for the entire island of Oahu. The JTMC communications center currently houses employees represented by the United Public Workers (UPW), the Hawaii Government Employees Association (HGEA), and the Hawaii Firefighters Association (HFFA) that are included in bargaining units 03, 04, 10, 11, and 15. As presently written, House Bill No. 1398 would place all employees who are centrally located at the City's main emergency communication center located at JTMC into the new bargaining unit 16, regardless of their current bargaining unit or union.

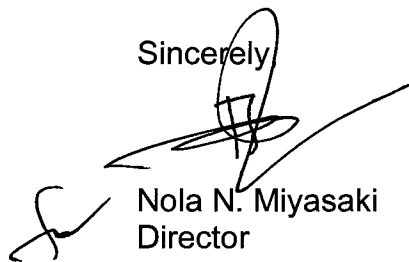
In addition, the City is currently administering contracts for nine different bargaining units involving four separate unions. As such, DHR has concerns regarding the increase in costs and complexities related to establishing, negotiating, arbitrating,

The Honorable Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
The Honorable Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee on
Labor & Government Operations
February 13, 2023
Page 2

and managing yet another bargaining unit and contract, particularly without added staff and resources.

The Mayor and the people of the City and County of Honolulu appreciate the hard working emergency dispatchers and we thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure. The Department of Human Resources respectfully requests that this measure be held.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Nola N. Miyasaki', written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and includes a large loop at the end.

Nola N. Miyasaki
Director

RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

KEKUHAUPIO R. AKANA
Acting Managing Director



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.mauicounty.gov

February 12, 2023

TO: Honorable Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Honorable Rep. Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair
House Committee on Labor & Government Operations

FROM: Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor

DATE: February 12, 2023

SUBJECT: SUPPORT OF HB 1398, RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to allow telecommunications and emergency dispatchers and employees who perform similar functions employed by the State and counties to collectively bargain.

I **SUPPORT** this measure for the following reasons:

1. Dispatchers are characterized and compensated as clerical employees, which limits their range of compensation.
2. Emergency services dispatchers are not physically at the scene of emergencies, but information gathered and communicated by dispatchers can mean the difference between positive and negative outcomes in an array of emergency situations, which contributes to a high-stress work environment.
3. This measure would allow telecommunications and emergency dispatchers and employees who perform similar functions employed by the State and counties to collectively bargain, which would support the opportunity for them to be compensated appropriately for the unique work they perform.

For the foregoing reasons, I **SUPPORT** this measure.

POLICE DEPARTMENT
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

801 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET · HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 529-3111 · INTERNET: www.honolulu.org

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR



ARTHUR J. LOGAN
CHIEF

KEITH K. MORIKAWA
RADE K. VANIC
DEPUTY CHIEFS

OUR REFERENCE **MK-GK**

February 14, 2023

The Honorable Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
and Members
Committee on Labor and
Government Operations
House of Representatives
415 South Beretania Street, Room 309
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Matayoshi and Members:

SUBJECT: House Bill No. 1398, Relating to Collective Bargaining

I am Matthew Kurihara, Captain of the Communications Division of the Honolulu Police Department (HPD), City and County of Honolulu.

The HPD supports House Bill No. 1398, Relating to Collective Bargaining.

This bill would remove telephone and emergency dispatchers from their current bargaining unit of white-collar workers and establish a new bargaining unit specifically for their job classification. This will help to differentiate these emergency call operators from clerical staff to a specialized unit more akin to other emergency units, such as police officers and firefighters, which more accurately reflects the nature of their work and the training and skills required for their duties.

Emergency communications personnel provide the vital link between those in need of help and the emergency service workers who provide that assistance. Their role, like others in emergency services, requires specialized training unfit for most other careers, long and unpredictable work shifts that require someone posted twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and a particular mindset able to deal with the stresses of these duties.

The Honorable Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
and Members
February 14, 2023
Page 2

Passage of this bill will help these essential emergency communications personnel negotiate a contract better suited to the specialized needs of their positions, obtain fairer benefits and compensation, and recognize the vital work done by these professionals. This will ideally result in better morale for current employees and a boost in recruitment.

The HPD urges you to support House Bill No. 1398, Relating to Collective Bargaining, and we appreciate the committee's consideration of our comments.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Matthew Kurihara, Captain
Communications Division

APPROVED:



Arthur J. Logan
Chief of Police

HB-1398

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 7:13:35 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gregg Okamoto	Maui Police Department	Support	In Person

Comments:

The Maui Police Department is in strong support of this bill and the emergency services dispatchers of our agency and all agencies statewide. We will be testifying in person on their behalf. 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-Second Legislature, State of Hawaii
The House of Representatives
Committee on Labor and Government Operations

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 14, 2023

H.B. 1398 — RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO strongly supports the purpose and intent of H.B. 1398 which allows telecommunications and emergency dispatchers and employees who perform similar functions employed by the state and counties to collectively bargain.

Telecommunication dispatchers, including police, fire, and emergency medical dispatchers, among others, handle crisis situations at all hours of the day. Dispatchers must utilize multiple life-saving procedures and technologies to obtain critical information from a caller to make lightning-fast decisions that could mean the difference between life and death of a public citizen. This group of employees is one of Hawaii's unsung heroes.

Telecommunication and emergency dispatchers continue to encounter work related issues including unsustainable workloads linked with mandatory overtime because of the employer's failure to successfully recruit and retain dispatchers. By creating a new bargaining unit, it allows these dispatchers to have a collective bargaining agreement that is tailored towards their needs in the workplace, which would alleviate many work-related issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of H.B. 1398.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director

HB-1398

Submitted on: 2/10/2023 9:09:01 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lyndsey Kahuhu	maui police	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As an emergency services dispatcher, it takes a lot more than just answering phones to do what we do. Our job is not something that can be explained in a few words or even an essay. It takes a very special person to be able to do what emergency services dispatchers do across the nation. I wish that these testimonies coming in will show all of you or whoever needs to see this to realize we are more than just "clerical" workers and should be classified in a different bargaining unit.

Written Statement of

Bonnie S. Kim

Honolulu Police Communications Officer II

Before the

Senate Committee on Labor and Government Operations

Tuesday, February 14, 2023

09:30 AM

Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

In consideration of HB 1398

RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Takuya and Members of the Committee:

I am in support of HB 1398. I have been a Police Communications Officer II at the Honolulu Police Department for 25 years. In my years of service, I have handled a variety of calls ranging from homicides, shooting, stabbing, home invasions, robberies, kidnapping, missing children to parking complaints. We receive calls and dispatch officers to all these types case. At times only having a few seconds to determine what is going on. We are the critical link between the public and the police.

Police Communications Officers are subject to the same hiring process as Police Officers, Those include a performance exam, personal history statement, back ground checks, criminal history checks, credit checks, psychological evaluations (written & verbal), polygraph test, medical exam, and a drug test.

The training program for a Police Communications Officer II is a year process. At the end of this training program a Recruit will be have the necessary skills needed to decipher the information the caller is giving, enter into a computer case and send to the radio in less than a minute. We often have cases where a critical incident or time sensitive situation is going on and we need to get emergency assistance to the scene as soon as possible.

When working on the Radio Section we need to maintain the status of at least 15 to 50 officers depending on district. We need to multi-task, talk, type & listen all while units are talking and often requesting information. All information needs to be recorded can time stamped into the CADS systems for future reference. Our documentation (computer generated or voice recordings) is sometimes used in a criminal case as evidence of an incident. .

Police Communications Officers work 24/7 365 days a year. We are subject to consistently forced overtime due to staff shortages. We are required to work during all emergencies such as hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes, island wide power outages, phone service outage and ballistic missiles attacks.

This job is extremely hard to do. We have continuous recruitment, and many find the nature of work too hard and emotional draining to pass the one-year long training.

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

Bonnie Kim

kokoraeya@gmail.com

Written Statement of

Michael J. Kim

Honolulu Police Communications Officer II

Before the

Senate Committee on Labor and Government Operations

Tuesday, February 14, 2023

09:30 AM

Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

In consideration of HB 1398

RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

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This job is extremely hard to do. We have continuous recruitment, and many find the nature of work too hard and emotional draining to pass the one-year long training.

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

Michael Kim

kylaraeya@gmail.com

Fawn T. Kiyota
Honolulu, Hawaii

**Written Statement of
Fawn T. Kiyota
Police Communications Officer II
before the
House Committee on Labor and Government Operations
Friday, February 14, 2023
9:30 AM**

**In consideration of HB 1398
RELATING TO EMERGENCY WORKERS**

Dear Chair Scot Z. Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett Andrew Takuya and members of the Committee:

I have been a dispatcher for the Honolulu Police Department for the last 20 years and fully support Senate Bill 1059: recognizing 911 emergency service dispatchers as first responders.

Currently, I am considered a “non-essential” worker. However, in times of dire need, when emergencies arise such as hurricanes, floods, tsunamis etc., I am bound by duty to report to work when all other non-essential workers are allowed to take time off to secure their safety and safety of their families.

Due to staffing shortages, I am often force mandated to work 4 hours over my normal 8 hour shift. After a grueling 8 hour shift, I am mentally drained. Enduring an additional 4 hours of verbal abuse from the public is often unbearable. I recall working on the night shift and being so exhausted from working a 12 hour mandated shift, that I couldn’t even remember the drive home. These forced mandates, made for the safety and benefit of the public, often put both my mental and physical self in jeopardy. Yet I am deemed “non essential”.

I maintain the status of “non essential” worker, yet there were times when I was forced to work thru circumstances that were potentially life threatening. Bomb threats were made to our building, all other non-essential workers were evacuated. I was forced to stay and work, all to ensure the safety of the public. A job that FIRST RESPONDERS do.

I implore you to recognize the true job scope, and sacrifices I make as a Police Radio Dispatcher. Please give all consideration in passing this bill. Thank you for your consideration.

HB-1398

Submitted on: 2/11/2023 4:07:08 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica LM Lafaele	Honolulu Police Department - Communications Div	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 11, 2023

Honorable Legislatures,

RE: I support SB#1059 & HB#1398, Hawaii Revised Statues, amending the definition of “emergency worker”.

As a resident of the City and County of Honolulu, I support the proposed SB#1059 & HB#1398 concerning the amendment of the definition of emergency worker to include **communications dispatchers aka police radio dispatchers who in the course of their duty 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 undergo the same lengthy background checks and scrutiny as Honolulu police officers during the hiring process; (less the physical fitness test police must pass).

As police communications officers, we are responsible for using multiple robust lifesaving procedures and technologies to obtain critical information from the callers, analyze the information given, and use specialized mapping systems when dispatching the appropriate police officer(s) / first responder.- SB1059/HB1398.

Your vote to pass these bills will allow emergency communication dispatchers aka police communications officers **to be recognized as the first responders we are.** I respectfully ask for your support.

Sincerely,

Jessica LM Lafaele

Police Communications Officer – 18 years

Honolulu Police Department

HB-1398

Submitted on: 2/11/2023 10:00:29 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jun Shin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A strong yes to welcoming telecommunications and emergency dispatchers who work for the State and Counties, as well as other public workers who perform similiar tasks into the labor movement, with all the rights, protections, and benefits in the workplace that unionization brings. Once this goes through the legislative process, it'll up to workers fight to maintain and expand what they win here.

KAUA'I POLICE DEPARTMENT-COMMUNICATIONS

Sarah Louxz | slouxz@kauai.gov

February 12, 2023

Aloha to all considering the amendment to H.B. NO. 1398:

First of all, I would like to thank everybody involved with getting this bill for an act as far as it has, I hope my statement along with other voices of 9-1-1 are able to continue the push and offer a unique perspective to what it means to work dispatch, telecommunications, or public safety answering personnel: an essential position in public safety.

To introduce myself: My name is Sarah and I have worked for the County of Kaua'i since August 2014. Currently our communications office has 17 dispatchers, three of whom are our permanent dispatch shift supervisors (DSS) divided over three platoons that cover the county over 24 hours. Our County Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) covers calls of service for Kaua'i Fire Department, Kaua'i Police Department, American Medical Response, and function as an emergency point of contact for various critical infrastructure entities including Hawai'i Department of Transportation, County of Kaua'i Public Works, Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative, County of Kaua'i Department of Water and more. The United States Census (2021) estimates a population of Kaua'i to be about 73,454 and the Hawai'i Tourism Authority released preliminary data approximating 1.3 million visitors to the island for 2022. Since each platoon is divided up, there are at least three dispatchers (four on a lucky day) to cover the needs of about 75,000 individuals at any given time.

These could be 75,000 screams for help, 75,000 last breaths, 75,000 pleas for pre-arrival instructions, 75,000 gasps of life.

We comfort, lead, de-escalate, and are the true face of first response in every single call.

3990 Ka'ana St Suite 200 Lihue, HI, 96766

Office: 808-241-1711

I hope the numbers put into perspective the sheer volume of traffic that goes on in a communications office. Some moments are cool and calm, other moments are ablaze and we find ourselves out of breath like we ran marathons. We take hours to wind down from busier days, which can seldomly be said for other clerical staff that have the privilege of not bringing their work home. All to be back to work the next day.

Working 9-1-1 is not for everybody. PSAPs across the country face shortages just like law enforcement. We suffer burnout too, and possibly even worse, with not being able to get closure on the hot calls. Then we are left wondering if we did absolutely everything we could do to save a life, or bring our officers home, or keep our fire, medic, and lifeguard units safe.

Most of us that are here, stayed for the love of the job. Despite the stress.

In conclusion, I would highly recommend you to consider this amendment to the bill. Perhaps it would be a step forward when it comes to overall morale of the PSAP, adjusting the pay so some of us do not have to work two or three jobs to cover housing and family costs that have fluctuated with inflation and rising living costs of Hawai'i, or maybe on the other hand it may motivate new people or old friend to return to this rewarding job within public service.

I deeply appreciate your consideration and hope that this decision, if made in favor, will open many opportunities for improvement in the State of Hawai'i and maybe even the nation! We are 9-1-1.

Mahalo nui! If you feel any need to contact me, you are welcomed to call or email at slouxz@kauai.gov anytime.

All the best,

Sarah Louxz

Emergency Services Dispatcher II, Platoon 2

HB-1398

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 5:30:35 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johanna Malama-Gomes Dumapit	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern,

As of right now, the Emergency Services Dispatchers of Kaua'i are categorized and compensated as clerical workers. Some of our duties include – but are not limited to – dispatching law enforcement, medical response teams, firefighters, rescue helicopters, and rescue water skis. We are the **first** first responders to any scene for our residents and visitors. Not only are we assuring our callers that we are getting them the assistance that they need, but we are also dispatching help to them, while monitoring our radios, and while logging down information.

We are blessed to live on a beautiful island, and with the beauty, comes emergencies. Many times, when we are answering an emergency call, we are greeted by persons who are visiting the island, and don't know exactly where they are. Our dispatchers quickly map where the caller is and send them assistance. We have multiple maps always open, and often go by landmarks that the caller is by. We must know our surroundings and be able to utilize our tools (maps) quickly and efficiently to send help.

Emergency Services Dispatchers are in a constant mode of keeping everyone safe. We use our voices to keep our callers safe, as well as our law enforcement officers, our medical personnel, and our firefighters. We are in constant communication with all parties involved to ensure the safety of everyone involved. With our 17 dispatchers we always have 3-4 people working at a time and are solely responsible for keeping a population of over 73,000 people safe.

Nobody calls 911 because they are having a good day. We are answering the calls to possibly someone's worst day. We are the voice within reason, we are the voice in the dark, and we are the voice of calm in the crazy. Like previously stated, we are the **first** first responders. We deserve to be compensated as more than just clerical workers. We are 911.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Johanna Malama-Gomes Dumapit
Emergency Services Dispatcher II

Kaua'i Police Department

Scott A.K. Sato

Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii

**Written Statement of
Scott A.K. Sato
Honolulu Police Dispatcher
before the
House Committee on Labor and Government Operations
Tuesday, February 14, 2023
9:30 AM
Conference Room 309 & Videoconference**

**In consideration of HB 1398
RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING.**

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett and Members of the Committee:

I am a Honolulu Police dispatcher for the last 19 years and fully SUPPORT House Bill 1398 that will recognize emergency service dispatchers as first responders and not clerical workers. This bill will allow us who perform critical services under high-stress to collectively bargain.

When someone dials 911 they will be reaching a 911 dispatcher who will then need to determine what type of service will need to be rendered. There are times when the person on the other end is hysterical, and it is my duty to calm them down to obtain as much information as possible as not to send the police into a what could be dangerous situation. Many calls are from people which English is their second language and I need to be able decipher and conclude how to provide assistance. Many a day we take threatening and/or abusive calls, are talked down to yet I need to keep my composure and provide the help that they require.

In the event of a State emergency like a hurricane, flooding or earthquake we are called into work as many police, fire, ambulance are but they are considered first responders while we dispatchers are still not. In the event of a bomb threat made to our location we are made to stay at our position and continue to take calls, putting our lives at risk to help the public, yet we are still not considered first responders.

Due to shortage of dispatchers we are "forced" or mandated to work overtime at least every other week. Many people have applied but do not make it through the end training which should tell you how difficult the job of a 911 dispatcher is. We are also losing many current dispatchers due to retirement and just unable to handle the high stress levels.

While our physical lives might not be in imminent danger as a police officer or paramedic our mental beings are put through the test daily.

I implore you to truly consider passing this bill and thank you for your consideration.

HB-1398

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 9:02:41 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
SHANNON SIMMONS	HPD	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To whom it may concern: I am a police communications officer for the Honolulu Police Department and I support this House Bill for my peers & I to have our own collective bargaining unit. We are emergency workers and should not be included with the clerks of bargaining unit 3. We are NOT clerks! We are dispatchers!

HB-1398

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 10:17:53 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maile Paakaula	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: CHAIR SCOT Z MATAYOSHI

VICE CHAIR ANDREW TAKUYA GARRETT

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: HB 1398

My name is Maile Paakaula. I am a POLICE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER, formally known as a Police Radio Dispatcher with the Honolulu Police Department for the past 33 years. I support HB1398 which creates a new collective bargaining unit 16, specifically to separate telecommunications and emergency dispatchers apart from regular clerical and secretarial workers. This bill would allow HPD Dispatchers to finally be recognized for the unyielding work that's conducted behind the scenes, coordinating first response services for the island of O'ahu.

During the COVID lockdown crisis (stay at home orders) Dispatchers were required to come to work, as there was no telework solution, subsequently placing a health risk not only on our workforce but to ourselves and family members. We persevered through the duties we signed up for without any expectation of accolades. We Dispatchers marched ahead to "Press Forward and Carry On." However, other city employees continued to receive pay while in the confines of their own homes providing them a safe haven from an infectious pandemic.

Furthermore, in times of natural disasters, it is then we are deemed an "essential" employee and mandated to fulfill our duties. Nonetheless, we forge through providing crucial lifeline emergency services for the entire island. We are told the Communications Division is the backbone of the Police Department, yet it feels more like the tailbone.

The training to become a Dispatcher is extensive! One must have the ability to remain calm as chaos abounds. To be flexible in a moment's notice, in facing the unknown as any call could be "the call." One must be adaptive to any situation while still being a bridge for emergency services.

Additionally, staffing issues have always been a reality in this division. Minimal manpower has affected every Dispatcher in this division resulting in overworked burnt-out employees. Unfortunately, while understaff, we face constant mandates (forced overtime) on short-notice,

two hours before our shift is about to end. This occurs on a regular basis in which we endure a twelve-hour shift coupled with forced breaks and lunches. To illustrate: A Dispatcher would relieve the prior shift at 0545 hours and be forced to take our “first” official fifteen-minute break at 0645, only ONE hour into our shift! Then forced to take a lunch break at 0815 or 0900 as those are the only times available to us, resulting in an exceptionally long day. The alternative option is to WAIVE the lunch break and several Dispatchers choose to do so working through the day without proper rest. Such true dedication and commitment!

Furthermore, we are not allowed to just get up and leave our position whenever we choose, even for a quick cup of coffee. We are not allowed to eat at our positions, like the other First Responder Dispatchers. We must wait for another Dispatcher to come and relieve us for our second break. At times we can wait thirty to forty-five minutes for your second break. As an adult, it’s almost like having to raise your hand to use the restroom, except it’s via a computer message, sometimes having to send multiple messages due to lack of staff.

Lastly, a Dispatcher is responsible not only for one police officer but an average of twenty or more police officers assigned to a single radio. COVID brought additional responsibilities such as the CET units (Covid Enforcement Team). This special task force assigned to enforce Covid/Mayor’s regulations where they were compensated overtime with special COVID funding dedicated to HPD and the Dispatchers now have the additional responsibility of not only our regular patrol units but all CET units while also trying to LEARN a new computer system. Unfortunately, this placed a heavier burden of work on the Dispatchers. The police officers called off at various locations as frustrated Dispatchers tried to figure out how to update their location in the new computer system. An example would be Manoa District Park is Manoa Valley District Park or Dole Park is Dole Playground. It sounds simple but the new system created a major learning curve and caused disruption among the operations seemingly to work against us and did not make for a smooth transition. The Communications staff received no additional compensation for all these new rules and changes.

These are snapshots of the duties of a Police Communications Officer.

Dispatcher motto is “Dispatcher’s Save Seconds, Seconds Save Lives.”

I ask that you please take a second to support this bill.

Thank you for your time,

Maile Paakaula

mpaakaula@honolulu.gov

Committee on Labor and Government Operations
Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Representative Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair

Tracy L. Pellazar
Supervisor-Emergency Services Dispatch
Maui Police Department, Communications Section
55 Mahalani St. Wailuku, HI 96793
(808)870-1490

Monday, February 13, 2023

Support of HB 1398, Relating to Collective Bargaining

My name is Tracy Pellazar and I'm an Emergency Services Dispatch Supervisor. I have been with the Maui Police Department going on 20 years now. From the beginning, we have been the main point of contact, the "hub" for all emergencies on the island (and in our county). We dispatch for all Police, Fire, and Medics, as well as answer 911 calls and Administrative Calls. Our workload has never lessened, but actually continues to increase as times change. We work alongside our fellow policemen, firemen, and medics, our shifts overlapping and intertwining. We are considered "first responders" by many, being that we are the first contact for any emergency. Several of our training courses, parallel those of our "on-the-road" responders. We too have saved lives, however, our life-saving incidents occur via the phone. We have assisted with giving birth, helped someone give CPR, given instructions on opening an airway, directed someone to a safe area, and much much more. We may not be physically on scene, but we have definitely had a part in these incidents. We do much more than people know, a lot is done behind the scenes.

Our job consists of a lot of multi-tasking. At any given time, we are answering 911s, dispatching units and relaying information to another agency, all at the same time. We do a lot of typing, however, our position should not be consider a "clerical" position. Our position incorporates a wide range of other job skills/duties with a more intense level of difficulty, and knowledge.

I fell in love with being an Emergency Services Dispatcher from the beginning, and I continue to love my job, and I'm considered one of our "lifers". It's not only a "job" but this is my life and alongside my fellow dispatchers, we take this position very seriously. We just want recognition where we feel it is due. I hope that you will consider my testimony in your decision.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration in this important matter, and allowing me to testify.

Testimony on House Bill 1398
RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 9:30 AM
Conference Room #309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
By
DAVLYNN RACADIO
EMERGENCY SERVICES DISPATCH COORDINATOR
OF THE MAUI POLICE DEPARTMENT

Honorable Chair Scot Matayoshi, Vice Chair Andrew Garrett and Members of the Labor and Government Operations Committee:

My name is Davlynn Racadio, I have been working for the Maui Police Department for more than 35 years, all of it within the 9-1-1 Communications Center. I stand in strong **support** of having the State's Telecommunications Dispatchers and Emergency Dispatchers be able to move to another bargaining unit that fits their job description and duties. I started as a dispatcher and worked my way to my current position. My people are the best in our State! Yes, I am prejudiced because they handle Police, Fire and Medics! We are a "Central Dispatch" concept where all the calls come into our Center, 9-1-1, Text to 9-1-1, and non-emergency calls. I have 39 position assigned to me but I only have 12 seats filled. I have three Supervisors when I should have six. The Molokai Dispatch Center (who handles calls for Molokai and Lanai) also falls under me and there I have only three people working. When there is insufficient manpower at Molokai, Maui will absorb all their calls and take over communications for the entire County. I do have two in training at this time, one for Maui and another for Molokai. The struggle to find competent people is real but that has not stopped me from continuous recruiting for both Centers.

We are looked at as clerks because we answer phones. Not just a regular phone but an advanced and robust system that brings in all emergency calls by either 9-1-1 or Text to 9-1-1, if a cellphone caller reaches the wrong island due to cell phone coverage, we have the ability to transfer to the correct Island or Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). Each County is connected through our advanced 9-1-1 system.

We man operations of our Communications Centers 24/7/365, even during COVID. We did not work from home. In our case, when someone was sick, we shut down our primary site and went to work at our Alternate Site, so that it could be professionally cleaned. At one point, we operated two centers during the respective shifts to keep everyone healthy.

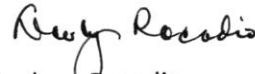
At the very beginning of COVID, the CDC made several recommendations on call taking procedures to ensure that we had sufficient information to protect our responders and ascertain the right equipment and units were being sent to those calls. We adjusted our call taking and dispatch protocols as requested by the CDC multiple times during COVID.

At no time were our communities that we serve ever in danger of having no one there to answer their call for help. Our people work long hours and still gave up their personal time to keep our communities safe.

But we are still looked at as clerks. Clerks don't stay on the phone with callers while they are pondering shooting themselves, or getting a call from an elderly distressed female that her husband is cold and won't talk to her or a mother calling that her baby is not breathing. A clerk would not start talking to someone calming that person, reaching out to gain their trust and have the person share what is going on in their lives that has diminished their hope to stay alive. A clerk would not be on the phone calming down "Gramma" letting her know that we have people coming to help her. A clerk would definitely not be on the phone with a brand-new Mommy that cannot get her baby to breath and we are walking her through CPR for babies trying to get that baby to breath again. And while we are on the phone with all of these people, we might be the same person dispatching the medics and fire to help them.

These people are not clerks and they are in the wrong bargaining unit. They should be elevated to a bargaining unit that reflects their responsibilities in saving lives and property. I **SUPPORT** HB1398 and respectfully request your assistance with this.

Humbly,



Davlynn Racadio
Maui Police Department, ESDC
OFC/808-244-6375
Cell/808-357-9689

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Representative Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair

February 13, 2023

Support for H.B. NO. 1398, Relating to Collective Bargaining

My name is Vernetta Logsdon and I am a Police Communications Officer at the Honolulu Police Department. I support HB1398, relating to collective bargaining. Although the minimum requirements when applying for a Police Communications Officer position are clerical, the actual job is not. Yes, we answer telephones and use computers to complete tasks, but there is much more to being the voice that the public hears when an emergency arises.

The application took one year to process because of written exams, background, criminal, and credit checks, polygraph exam, psychological interview and exam, and medical exam. Once hired, classroom and on the job training was one year on three different shifts. We've taken calls from the public requesting non-emergency services e.g. loud radio complaints or reporting abandoned vehicles to emergency situations including domestic arguments, pedestrian involved motor vehicle accidents, home invasions, stabbings, and shootings. The job doesn't end once that phone is disconnected. We need to make sure other help is on the way such as EMS, HFD or HECO depending on the situation. Radio operators require multitasking skills to perform many different requests for at least 15-20 officers. At the radio there can be 5-10 cases with officers on different cases asking for different requests like suspect background checks, driver's license info, need for a tow wagon or ambulance. All at the same time! These must be completed in a timely manner to ensure officer and public safety.

We are a 24/7 operation, 365 days a year. Just like police officers and firefighters we are required to report to work during natural disasters. While others are given administrative leave during hurricanes or tsunamis we leave our families and risk our lives by driving through the bad weather so that we can also help to save lives and property. During the Coronavirus pandemic when the entire island of Oahu was shut down, we were considered essential and showed up to work. In addition, we are constantly mandated. This means we are forced to work involuntary overtime whenever there is not enough staff.

I have been a Police Communication Officer for 16 years. I can proudly say I have saved lives. I urge the committee to pass HB1398. Thank you for this opportunity to submit my written testimony.

Vernetta Logsdon
91-201 Koanimakani Place
Kapolei HI 96707

Council Chair
Alice L. Lee



Director of Council Services
Traci N. T. Fujita, Esq.


Councilmembers
Tom Cook
Gabe Johnson
Tasha Kama
Tamara Paltin
Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez
Shane M. Sinenci
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura
Nohelani U'u-Hodgins

Deputy Director of Council Services
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

COUNTY COUNCIL
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WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
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February 13, 2023

TO: The Honorable Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Labor & Government
Operations

FROM: Alice L. Lee
Council Chair 

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF FEBRUARY 14, 2023; TESTIMONY IN
SUPPORT OF HB 1398, RELATING TO COLLECTIVE
BARGAINING**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to allow telecommunications and emergency dispatchers and similar employees to collectively bargain.

The Maui County Council has not had the opportunity to take a formal position on this measure. Therefore, I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I support this measure for the following reasons:

1. Emergency dispatchers are part of the critical infrastructure of the public-safety system.
2. Emergency dispatchers deal with stressful situations daily as they make split-second decisions that affect the public's safety and well-being.
3. This measure would recognize emergency dispatchers' importance and skill, allowing them to collectively bargain the pay and benefits that they rightfully deserve.

For the foregoing reasons, I **support** this measure.

HB-1398

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 11:27:51 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chelly Hasiak	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill.

February 10, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

Aloha, my name is Lieutenant Jamie Winfrey, a twenty-eight year veteran of the Maui Police Department. Emergency Services Dispatchers deserve to be recognized as First Responders. If you think about it, Emergency Services Dispatchers are the first people on scene of an accident, criminal case, or a medical emergency. The moment they answer that phone call, and hear the screams from a helpless mother whose baby is not breathing, or the desperation of a wife who was so severely beaten by an estranged husband asking for help, or the cries of a child who just found both parents dead from an apparent murder suicide, their mind will start to visualize the totality of that situation.

Long after that call has been disconnected, the things they were just exposed too, doesn't just disappear. Please give them the recognition they've earned. They are FIRST RESPONDERS. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at (808) 553-4120 or via email Jamie.winfrey@mpd.net.

Mahalo

Jamie Winfrey

Aloha,

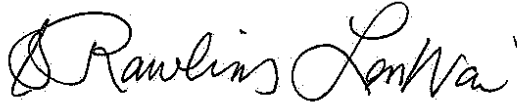
I am an Emergency Service Dispatcher for the Island of Molokai/Lanai and been doing this for 17 years. My name is Sheryl Rawlins-Len-Wai, born and raised on Molokai. I am sharing my testimony in regards to HB1398, Bargaining Unit Bill, hoping you will consider helping us achieve and recognized that we are considered First Responders.

This career has many challenge with different types of people who calls us for service that is important in their lives from medical calls or having someone to talk to, to get them thru a bad situation. We also have calls from our own family members that we need to hold our composure to ensure we are getting the help or services they need in a timely manner.

We work along with our Police units, Medic units, and Fire units to make sure everyone in our community is safe. Sometimes we get calls that are really close and emotions can be hard to hold back.

So I believe our job is more of a First Responder than a clerk type of job and ask for your support in seeing this bill move forward.

Mahalo Nu Nui,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheryl Rawlins-Len-Wai". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sheryl Rawlins-Len-Wai

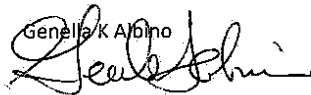
Aloha!

My name is Genella K Albino, I was born and raised on the island of Moloka'i, I am sharing my testimony in regards to HB1398, the Bargaining Unit Bill. I am in full support of this bill and hope you will consider helping us achieve our goal in being recognized as First Responders and not as Clerks and supporting us in having our bargaining unit changed to better suit the positions we hold.

On August 1st this year, I will have been an Emergency Services Dispatcher for 6 years. I cannot imagine myself in any other career, this has become me. I get to help people throughout but not limited to all of Maui County. I help people who are dealing with matters of life or death, people who may be lost in the mountains, people who suffer from mental illness, people who feel broken, people who are having the worst day of their lives, people who fear they may have already lost a loved one whether from suicide or natural causes or an illness, frightened children who are witnessing domestic violence, plane crashes, baby births, and most recently, witnessing the fear in the voices on our radios of fellow first responders as they witness one of their own get sucked into a storm drain! I heard my fellow Dispatchers effortlessly coordinate rescue for our firefighter all the while, I know with a surety, all of our eyes were filled with tears and our hearts were filled with fear for him.

Imagine the roller coaster of emotions we as Emergency Services Dispatchers go through day in and day out, not knowing what the day will bring or what the next call will be like. It takes a unique person to do this job, it takes a person with much aloha for their fellow men, a heart that desires to give service and knows empathy. I can tell you that no "clerk" could do what Emergency Services Dispatchers do. I would not want a "clerk" answering a 911 call from one of my loved ones. I humbly ask for your support in seeing this bill move forward in the right direction.

Mahalo nui,

Genella K Albino


HB-1398

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 1:03:17 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lakea Tjomsland	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Representatives,

I support H.B. 1398

I am in favor of H.B. 1398. I believe this will allow Telecommunications and emergency dispatchers a seat at the table to negotiate the policies and practices that currently due to our classification we don't get to negotiate on. However the state & counties deem Telecommunications employees exempt after the fact, which leaves employees subject to the policies and practices, and unfavorable working conditions.

I have been a Police Communications Officer II, for the Honolulu Police Department for twenty-three years. I have handled a variety of cases from homicides, home invasions, robberies, kidnapping, escapee from prison, critical motor vehicle, and an array or others type of cases. During my year-long training, I have acquired specific skills to utilize during call taking and radio operations. When receiving a call that is critical and time sensitive situation, I need to gather information quickly, and get Police Officers and other agencies responding. Telecommunications Officers need to be able to multitask, talk, type, and listen while officers are talking, running checks, caller is screaming, yelling or often talking to people in the back ground. We need to be the calming voice that is heard over the radio and phone lines.

Currently Telecommunications Operators are not deemed essential employees or 1st responders. We currently are classified as clerical. Taking 911 calls requires significant training and competencies such as situational assessment skills and sound judgment, strong public and internal relations, teamwork and advanced multitasking skills. Telecommunications officers are part of the critical infrastructure of the public safety system. We are the 1st line of communications for people needing law enforcement, fire or medical response. We are the lifeline to the law enforcement, fire & medical responders on scene.

During the most recently Covid-19 pandemic, all Honolulu Police Communicators Officers and staff were deemed exempt from all of the Governor's & Mayors emergency orders and proclamations. Employees were ordered to work all regular scheduled hours at assigned work sites. Employees were deemed exempt from all corvid protocols including working 6 feet apart,

wearing mask & having proper sanitizing equipment. Employees share work equipment daily & employees were put in hazardous situations by not having proper personal protective equipment.

Telecommunications Employees are elevated to essential workers during natural disasters like earthquakes, hurricane, and tsunamis. Employees are also elevated to attendance critical when there are daily shortages to staffing numbers due to vacant positions, sick leave, vacations, and special assignment issues. There were over 1450 instances last year that Honolulu Police Communications employees were forced to work mandatory overtime. There are currently only 86 Police Communications Officers I and Police Communications Officer II. Presently, there are 44 open positions. We process about a million calls for service a year.

We are requesting to create a new bargaining unit 16 to address issues we face daily while trying to serve our communities. We work 24/7 365 days a year. We intend to negotiate for Telecommunications and emergency dispatchers and the unique issues we face specific to our jobs. We need to focus mandatory overtime, shortage of staff, training, and stress during critical incidents, discipline actions, and health safety of our work sites. We must be allowed to negotiate as essential and attendance critical workers.

Thank you for allowing me to submit my testimony.

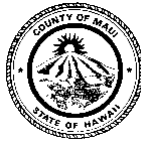
Lakea Tjomsland

P.O. Box 4222

Kaneohe Hi 96744

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Yuki Lei K. Sugimura
Nohe U'u-Hodgins

Deputy Director of Council Services
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

COUNTY COUNCIL
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WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
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February 13, 2023

TO: Honorable Scot. Z Matayoshi, Chair
House Committee on Labor & Government Operations

FROM: 
Yuki Lei Sugimura
Councilmember

DATE: February 13, 2023

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT FOR HB 1398, RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to allow telecommunications and emergency dispatchers and employees who perform similar functions employed by the State and counties to collectively bargain.

I SUPPORT this measure because our emergency dispatchers serve a vital role in ensuring public safety. I have witnessed firsthand the professionalism and expertise of these workers, while performing their duties under immense stress. Allowing our emergency dispatchers to collectively bargain for fair compensation is long overdue.

For the foregoing reasons, I SUPPORT this measure.