

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



KENNETH S. HARA  
MAJOR GENERAL  
ADJUTANT GENERAL

STEPHEN F. LOGAN  
BRIGADIER GENERAL  
DEPUTY ADJUTANT GENERAL

STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**  
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL  
3949 DIAMOND HEAD ROAD  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96816-4495

TESTIMONY ON SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 79  
URGING THE COUNTIES TO RECOGNIZE 911 EMERGENCY SERVICES DISPATCHERS  
AS FIRST RESPONDERS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE JURISDICTIONS

PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEES ON:  
PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MILITARY AFFAIRS  
&  
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

BY

EVERETT S. KANESHIGE  
STATEWIDE INTEROPERABILITY COORDINATOR

March 31, 2022

Chairs Nishihara and Moriwaki, Vice Chairs DeCoite and Dela Cruz and Members of the Committees on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs and Government Operations.

My name is Everett Kaneshige, and I am the Statewide Interoperability 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 S.C.R. No. 79.

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. Each of them is called upon to fulfill skills they have learned during extensive training where communications with individuals during a variety of situations means coaching their callers through first aid, collecting important information to relay to officers, and negotiating persons out of difficult situations.

Currently, 911 emergency services dispatchers are usually classified as an office and administrative support occupation. As a result, these skilled personnel cannot be hired at a level of pay and benefits commensurate with their level of training and expertise. This Resolution represents an important first step to urge the Counties to recognize the importance and specialized functions that , 911 emergency services dispatchers perform on a daily basis so that they can receive the compensation, benefits and recognition that they deserve as first responders.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in **Support** of S.C.R. No.79.

Frank J. Pace, Administrator, Office of Homeland Security, [frank.j.pace@hawaii.gov](mailto:frank.j.pace@hawaii.gov), 808-369-3570

Everett Kaneshige, Statewide Interoperability Coordinator, [everett.s.kaneshige@hawaii.gov](mailto:everett.s.kaneshige@hawaii.gov)  
808-369-3523

**SCR-79**

Submitted on: 3/29/2022 12:04:31 PM

Testimony for GVO on 3/31/2022 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Stacey Moniz	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha,

I stand in **STRONG SUPPORT** of this resolution, HCR 79. I was shocked to learn that our 911 dispatchers are classified as 'clerks,' and feel very strongly that they are without a doubt 'First Responders.'

I serve as a commissioner on both the State Commission on the Status of Women and the Maui Police Commission. This issue speaks loudly to me in both these capacities as the dispatchers are overwhelmingly women and we struggle to hire and retain dispatchers at the Maui Police Department. I was blessed to be able to shadow the dispatchers and, 'plug in,' with them to see/hear/experience in real time the important, life-saving work they do.

These are the people who answer the call 24/7 when there are horrific things happening: whether it is a fatal accident and your loved one is dying next to you, or you are stuck in your car with a raging torrent of rainwater coming your way while you wait for the fire department, or who walk you through CPR or childbirth, or when your child calls 911 because you're being strangled by your partner. Nowhere on the planet would this kind of work be considered clerical.

I have read the report from the State's Department of Resoures Development and I believe they missed an opportunity to correct this problem. I am outraged that they compared 911 emergency dispatchers to dispatchers from the water department. I feel offended on their behalf. I had hoped that the Legislature would be able to solve this problem STATEWIDE and I hope you do work to do that. However, given the circumstances we are in, the strongest solution left is to **STRONGLY** encourage the Counties to make these changes themselves.

I promise this: I will follow this through until it is changed because I believe 911 dispatchers should be recognized as first responders, paid as first responders, and honored as first responders. Just ask anyone who has had these folks on their phoneline while waiting for fire, medics or police to arrive. Dispatchers were with them from the minute they called 911.

Mahalo for your consideration of my testimony in strong support of this resolution.

Peace and love,  
Stacey Moniz



**SCR-79**

Submitted on: 3/30/2022 1:53:35 PM

Testimony for GVO on 3/31/2022 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leah Quinata	Testifying for Honolulu Police Department	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support the recognition of 911 Emergency Services Dispatchers as First Responders. As a Police Radio Dispatcher for 21 years I strongly believe we are the first line of communication for persons needing law enforcement, fire or medical response and are also the lifeline to law enforcement.

We have come a long way in 20 years with a newly upgraded CADS computer system and a mapping system of finding callers and keeping track of our units.

Although we are not physically at the scene, we also suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, stemming from answering traumatic calls from distressed people and hearing officers deal with traumatic calls over the radio.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY  
OF  
DAVLYNN RACADIO, SESD  
MAUI POLICE DEPARTMENT  
To The  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
SENATOR SHARON MORIWAKI, CHAIR  
SENATOR DONOVAN DELA CRUZ, VICE CHAIR  
AND  
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MILITARY AFFAIRS  
SENATOR CLARENCE NISHIHARA, CHAIR  
SENATOR LYNN DECOITE, VICE CHAIR  
ON  
Thursday, March 31, 2022  
3:03 PM  
Conference Room 016

SCR79 / SR72  
URGING THE COUNTIES TO RECOGNIZE 911 EMERGENCY SERVICES DISPATCHERS AS  
FIRST RESPONDERS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE JURISDICTIONS.

Chair Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair Donovan Dela Cruz  
Chair Clarence Nishihara, Vice Chair Lynn De Coite  
And all Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to provide strong support testimony on Senate Resolutions  
SCR79 and SR72.

I am Davlynn Racadio, a Supervising Emergency Services Dispatcher (SESD) for nearly 23 years and before that I was an Emergency Services Dispatcher/Trainer for 12 years. I have seen many people apply for this Job but not just anyone is cut out to do this. No one can walk off the street and do this stressful, multi-tasking, overwhelming and now, highly technical tasks. These people who commit to the position, are the ones that are responsible for making immediate decisions that can save a life, a home, prevent someone from taking their life or guide an elderly couple that cannot find their way home.

Speaking for Maui County 2021, our total 911 calls taken were 160,000. That does not count the 106,000 administrative (non-emergency) phone calls and 260 Text to 9-1-1 calls that was processed. With all of that, for each phone call there are generated at least five radio transmissions for a total of 1,331,440.

These figures might sound unrealistic to many people but just think if we were to combine all the Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) or 911 Communications Centers Statewide to support each Counties jurisdiction but this is the responsibility each person carries. Emergency Services Dispatchers (ESDs) in Maui County are certified in Pre-Arrival Medical Instructions, they start the process of asking for medical history in preparation of the ambulance arrival. They can start the CPR process prior to ambulance arriving and give the patient a better chance of surviving.

During the COVID pandemic, our staff reported to work day in/day out to support our Communities. Although we tried our best to keep everyone healthy, we can only control within our own areas. Even with that, our centers continued operations without closing down. Everyone stepped up to support our communities and each other. More importantly, we were taking care of Legislators constituents. We followed CDC guidelines and our own internal Standards to be sure we gave the public the best we could. Every Counties Communications Centers have been working long hours, not only to address the COVID pandemic but that does not stop the regular 911 calls: Domestic Abuse, Thefts, Burglaries, Fires, Heart Attacks and Motor Vehicle Accidents with Trapped/Injured people.

Technology in a 911 Center has exploded! We have added robust mapping tools that allow us to find victims especially when they call 911 and they do not know where they are at. But on the other side, this is an added duty to the ESD to learn the application and use it for the benefit of finding a lost hiker that climbed a mountain, a person who fell off a bicycle and rolled under a guard rail or someone on a boat that is crashing into rocks.

Our personnel while certified, must participate in Continuous Dispatch Education (CDEs) tests to prove they are always learning and improving. This is just one piece of the puzzle that builds a confident, knowledgeable and empathetic ESD. The goal is always to strive to be better and improve.

For the reasons listed above, Emergency Services Dispatchers or 911 Communications Officers (depending on your jurisdiction) are extraordinary people. They support our communities, sacrifice their family time and take on additional hours so that if someone calls 911, the call will be answered. They paint a picture for the Police, Fire or Medics before they arrive on scene so that they will be mentally prepared for what they will find when they arrive. They then coordinate all the other little details that would mean nothing to callers but means everything at the scene of the incident.

Almost every 911 Communications Center has manpower shortages. We have it here in Hawaii and it is a nationwide problem. We must protect the people who have committed to helping our Communities, support them in their quest for knowledge or guidance and clear paths for them to be able to speak to someone when they are overwhelmed by issues that they have to deal with every day. They need a venue to access mental health wellness and we should have that readily accessible.

I strongly support these Resolutions and respectfully request that they be passed to urge the Counties to recognize and support the entire State of Hawaii's 911 Emergency Services Dispatchers as First Responders in their respective jurisdictions.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and share a glimpse of what these great people do.

Respectfully,

Davlynn Racadio        SESD  
Maui Police Department  
Communications Section  
[Davlynn.Racadio@mpd.net](mailto:Davlynn.Racadio@mpd.net)  
March 29, 2022 @ 1210 hr







STATE OF HAWAII ORGANIZATION OF POLICE OFFICERS

" A Police Organization for Police Officers Only "  
Founded 1971

March 28, 2022

**ONLINE/FAX: 808-586-6829; 808-586-6091**

The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Chair  
The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair  
Senate Committee on Government Operations  
Hawaii State Capitol, Rooms 208, 223

**ONLINE/FAX: 808-586-6879; 808-587-7230**

The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair  
The Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Vice-Chair  
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs  
Hawaii State Capitol, Rooms 214, 231  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: **SCR 79; SR 72-Urging The Counties To Recognize 911 Emergency Services Dispatchers As First Responders In Their Respective Jurisdictions**

Dear Chairs Moriwaki and Nishihara, Vice-Chairs Dela Cruz and DeCoite, and Honorable Committee members:

I serve as the President of the State of Hawaii Organization of Police Officers ("SHOPO") and write to you on behalf of our Union in strong **support** of SCR 79 and SR 72 which calls for the formal recognition of our sister and brother dispatchers as first responders.

As far as we are concerned, our police dispatchers are unsung heroes who are without a doubt **first responders**. Our safety and ability to stay alive depends on their abilities and attentiveness during each and every call we are sent to. They experience together with us the trauma and stress of critical calls, shootings, violent crimes, assaults, robberies, etc. They are often placed into a position where they have to make split second decisions without being able to physically observe what may be unfolding at a scene but they do so because they can read and translate the emotions they hear in our voices when we communicate with them on the radio. The stress our police dispatchers have to endure is tremendous and not appreciated by the public because they remain out of view and out of the public eye.

**Main Office & Honolulu Chapter Office**  
1717 Hoe Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96819-3125  
Tel: (808) 847-4676 "84 SHOPO"  
www.shopohawaii.org Fax: (808) 841-4818

**Hawaii Chapter Office**  
688 Kinoole Street, Room 220B  
Hilo, Hawaii 96720-3877  
Tel: (808) 934-8405  
Fax: (808) 934-8210

**Kauai Chapter Office**  
3176 Oihana Street, Suite 104, Lihue  
Mailing Add: P. O. Box 1708  
Lihue, Hawaii 96766-5708  
Tel: (808) 246-8911

**Maui Chapter Office**  
1887 Wili Pa Loop, Suite 2  
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793-1253  
Tel: (808) 242-6129  
Fax: (808) 242-9519

The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Chair  
The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair  
Senate Committee on Government Operations

The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair  
The Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Vice-Chair  
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs  
Re: SCR 79; SR 72-Urging The Counties To Recognize 911 Emergency Services Dispatchers  
As First Responders In Their Respective Jurisdictions  
March 28, 2022  
Page 2

Similar to our current shortage of police officers, dispatchers are also running short on their shifts. It is not an easy job, it is highly stressful, and the hours are grueling especially when they have no choice but to work overtime because they do not want to leave our officers out on the road without the protection and lifeline of competent, timely, and accurate communication. But we, as police officers and as a police union, hold our dispatchers in the highest regard, know exactly who they are, what they do, and genuinely value and respect their services.

Many may not know but when a natural disaster warning is issued such as a hurricane warning, flashflood watch, or tsunami warning, our police dispatchers are mandated to leave their families and loved ones behind and immediately report to duty, and they do just that without hesitation whenever duty calls. They are unquestionably true first responders who deserve to be recognized as such.

We honor and our grateful to each and every one of our sister and brother police dispatchers. We thank you for allowing us to be heard on this important resolution and hope your committee will unanimously support it.

Respectfully submitted,

ROBERT "BOBBY" CAVACO  
SHOPO President

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
SENATOR SHARON Y. MORIWAKI, CHAIR  
SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, VICE CHAIR

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MILITARY AFFAIRS  
SENATOR CLARENCE K. NISHIHARA, CHAIR  
SENATOR LYNN DECOITE, VICE CHAIR

**SCR79 / SR 72**

THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2022  
AT 03:05 P.M. CONFERENCE ROOM 016/VIDEOCONFERENCE

**IN SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION (SCR79/SR72)**

My name is Suzette Perreira, and I am an Emergency Services Dispatcher II with the Maui Police Department. I am in support of both resolutions (SCR79/SR72) as I stand by 911 Emergency Services Dispatchers being recognized as first responders. Every day, we take calls where we are the first responder to the call. I have had to walk callers through CPR as they are there with their loved one waiting for Police, Fire, or EMS to arrive. I have had suicidal callers who are at their most vulnerable state and be able to be the calm voice on the other end until Police and EMS arrive. I have had frantic callers who need a calm voice to help them get under control so they can look for their 2-year-old grandson who is missing. This is just to name a few. If this legislation is passed, it would make such an impact on our center. First, to finally recognize us as first responders alongside our fellow cohorts. We have been so understaffed for so long that I feel this bill will help increase staffing issues, as well as increase moral. We are the voices behind 911, we are there whether you call day or night. I love what I do every day.

In conclusion, I am in support of resolution (SCR79/SR72), I certainly believe that Emergency Dispatchers deserve to be recognized as first responders. We go to work every day knowing that we are there to keep the public safe as well as our fellow brothers and sisters that are Police, Fire, and Medics personnel. We have one of the most important jobs. Your consideration to this letter is greatly appreciated.

Mahalo,

Suzette Perreira  
Emergency Services Dispatcher II  
Maui Police Department  
55 Mahalani St. Wailuku, HI 96793  
808-281-9002

**SCR-79**

Submitted on: 3/29/2022 12:36:46 PM

Testimony for GVO on 3/31/2022 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
David Mendonsa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

David Mendonsa  
2120 Kaohu Street  
Wailuku, HI 96793

Hawaii State Legislature  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 South Beretania St.  
Honolulu, HI 96813

TO: Committee on Government Operations & Committee Public Safety Intergovernmental and Military Affairs/ Member(s) of the Hawaii State Legislature

FR: David Mendonsa

Relating to: SCR79/ SR 72 URGING THE COUNTIES TO RECOGNIZE 911 EMERGENCY SERVICES DISPATCHERS AS FIRST RESPONDERS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE JURISDICTIONS

Please support SCR79/ SR 72 URGING THE COUNTIES TO RECOGNIZE 911 EMERGENCY SERVICES DISPATCHERS AS FIRST RESPONDERS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE JURISDICTIONS.

The 911 emergency dispatch personnel are essential to the Public Safety, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Emergency Management, and the response(s) beyond all 911 emergencies. They are the vital link between the community and the responders that are deployed to mitigate all emergencies. All too often, 911 is only heard, but, when a volatile situation arises, they perform. They are always there to answer 911. Their work environment is stressful having to communicate with the reporting party, provide pre-arrival instructions, dispatch response entities, maintain the situational awareness for our response system.

I have seen firsthand how they manage call taking, dispatch units, monitor all response entities and activities. They feel the stress of the caller, medics, police, and fire personnel. There is no rest for them in the tenuous activities of call taking and dispatching. 911 call-takers are not data entry personnel, they are the sentinel forces driving the response of the first response community.

I know the decision is difficult. I am humbled at the opportunity to provide testimony. Please support this initiative for SCR79/ SR 72 (911 emergency dispatch personnel).

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 808-268-0268.

Mahalo Nui,  
David Mendonsa, PA-C, Paramedic  
Prior-Army Medic & EMS Faculty

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
SENATOR SHARON Y. MORIWAKI, CHAIR  
SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, VICE CHAIR

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MILITARY AFFAIRS  
SENATOR CLARENCE K. NISHIHARA, CHAIR  
SENATOR LYNN DECOITE, VICE CHAIR

**SCR79 / SR 72**

THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2022  
AT 03:05 P.M. CONFERENCE ROOM 016/VIDEOCONFERENCE

**IN SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION (SCR79/SR72)**

My name is Suzette Perreira, and I am an Emergency Services Dispatcher II with the Maui Police Department. I am in support of both resolutions (SCR79/SR72) as I stand by 911 Emergency Services Dispatchers being recognized as first responders. Every day, we take calls where we are the first responder to the call. I have had to walk callers through CPR as they are there with their loved one waiting for Police, Fire, or EMS to arrive. I have had suicidal callers who are at their most vulnerable state and be able to be the calm voice on the other end until Police and EMS arrive. I have had frantic callers who need a calm voice to help them get under control so they can look for their 2-year-old grandson who is missing. This is just to name a few. If this legislation is passed, it would make such an impact on our center. First, to finally recognize us as first responders alongside our fellow cohorts. We have been so understaffed for so long that I feel this bill will help increase staffing issues, as well as increase moral. We are the voices behind 911, we are there whether you call day or night. I love what I do every day.

In conclusion, I am in support of resolution (SCR79/SR72), I certainly believe that Emergency Dispatchers deserve to be recognized as first responders. We go to work every day knowing that we are there to keep the public safe as well as our fellow brothers and sisters that are Police, Fire, and Medics personnel. We have one of the most important jobs. Your consideration to this letter is greatly appreciated.

Mahalo,

Suzette Perreira  
Emergency Services Dispatcher II  
Maui Police Department  
55 Mahalani St. Wailuku, HI 96793  
808-281-9002

Committee on Government Operations  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Chair  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs  
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair  
Senator Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair

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

Tuesday, March 29, 2022

Support of SCR 79/SR 72, Urging the counties to recognize 911 Emergency Services Dispatchers as first responders in their respective jurisdictions.

My name is Tracy Pellazar and I'm an Emergency Services Dispatch Supervisor. I have been with the Maui Police Department for almost 19 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, in actuality, "first responders". We are the first contact for any emergency. We are the ones that you and your family speak to first. 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 of what we do is behind the scenes, and we are much more than clerks. Several of our training courses, parallel those of our "on-the-road" first responders.

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 for allowing me to testify.

**SCR-79**

Submitted on: 3/30/2022 9:13:55 AM

Testimony for GVO on 3/31/2022 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michelle Loando	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Emergency services dispatchers are the first line of contact for the public in any emergency situation. They take thousands of calls each day often having to make split second decisions that can make the difference between life and death. They operate complex computer systems and perform multiple tasks providing vital information to field units. They are on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, working weekends, holidays, and often mandatory overtime shifts to ensure that calls for service are answered. Emergency services dispatchers play a vital part in emergency response and should be recognized as first responders.



**SCR-79**

Submitted on: 3/30/2022 9:32:40 AM

Testimony for GVO on 3/31/2022 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Melia K. Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Melia Johnson and I am an Emergency Service Dispatcher for the Maui Police Department. I have been with the department for 13 years as an ESD and have responded to many 911 calls for those in distress and in need. I cannot comprehend how for all of these years, others have failed to recognize us as first responders. I have given cpr instructions to so many, I have helped mothers and dads deliver their babies, I have comforted parents who came home to find their child hanging while trying to help them start cpr. I have helped those in domestic situations find safety and sent them help, and so much more. We deal with trauma every minute we are at work and are trained to do so. I have countless hours of training in power phone, cpr, crisis intervention, etc. I hope that you will be able to do what is right in this career that has given me so much joy and honor to serve my home and my community. We do know that this career choice is not for many. We are an elite group that has chosen to put our families sometimes second to stay and answer the call for help. While others are headed home to prepare for a hurricane or a tsunami, I give my children a kiss, make sure they know our family agency plan of action, and head to work. Please make the right choice and recognize all 911 dispatchers as first responders.

O wau iho no,

Melia Johnson

To whom it may concern,

I am supporting SCR 79 and SR 72, urging the counties to recognize 911 Emergency Services Dispatchers as first responders in their respective jurisdictions.

My name is Kimberly Lee and I have been a Police Communications Officer for 27 years. To become a Police Communications Officer I went through a year of intense classroom and hands on training. We constantly learn different skills to make us more efficient at our job. With technology advancing, there is so much to learn like Computer Aided Dispatching, Geographical Information Systems and Automatic Vehicle Locator Technologies. It would be beneficial to be able to get more critical training for our personnel. Having the title of first responder would allow for that.

Our responsibilities include taking 911 calls for police, dispatching emergency personnel and coordinating with other responding agencies. We are responsible for the preservation of life and property. We are the first to answer your call for assistance, obtain pertinent information to assist our officers and the caller. There is so much to our job duties, always multitasking and being aware of what is going on. We dispatch officers to assist people in need and assist our officers with keeping track of them and what they may need. We take thousands of calls for police daily, we have intense life and death situations like shooting, chases, suicides, assaults and so many other traumatic events. We go into work and stay at work when other workers get to go home due to hurricane or other weather warnings. When we had the Missile alert no one in our communications center left. We all stayed and worked because we knew we were needed. Is that what clerks do? Currently we are labeled as clerical, which I feel is insulting. We should be recognized for what we do.

Please help us to be acknowledged as first responders.

Thank you,

Kimberly Lee

**SCR-79**

Submitted on: 3/30/2022 2:31:43 PM

Testimony for GVO on 3/31/2022 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sabrina Rogers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Sabrina Rogers, I have worked as a Police Dispatcher for 4 years, two of those years I worked for an agency in California, and I am now very proud to be a part of and represent the Honolulu Police dept.

In my years dispatching for California, I was not initially considered a first responder, but after fighting for many years we finally won that battle and became recognized as first responders in the state of California.

Unfortunately it was very disappointing to have fought so hard for that to come work for another department to find that I have to fight this battle again.

That being said currently many states are now following suit; and it is beyond time.

There is currently a mass under staffing issue with dispatchers not just here in Honolulu, but all over the country and I believe this is greatly due to the fact that we are not considered first responders which equates to inadequate wages, training, and work environments.

The homeland security act of 2002 defines the term "first responder" as someone who in the beginning of an emergency incident are responsible for the protection and preservation of life, property, evidence, and the environment. By definition that is exactly what we do on a daily basis.

Currently we are considered secretaries. With all due respect to secretaries they are not required to come to work during a hurricane, pandemic, or any other mass emergency event. They are not forced to leave the safety of their home during an emergency event and leave their families at home to assist the public. They do not hold people's lives in their hands, they are not forced to work a 12 or 16 hour shift because they are short staffed.

With every key stroke we are saving lives and getting people the urgent help they need as fast as we can. We are an essential part of any emergency event and should be recognized as such.

Thank you,

Sabrina Rogers

Police Communications Officer I, Honolulu Police Dept.

**SCR-79**

Submitted on: 3/30/2022 3:03:07 PM

Testimony for GVO on 3/31/2022 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Flossie Ann Leong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Flossie Ann “Ah Lan” Leong and I strongly support SCR 79 and SR 72.

Dispatchers are the FIRST to experience the impact of a 911 caller’s pain, panic, anger, terror, or frustration, and in an emergency, callers often may not know or be able to communicate where they are. A dispatcher will be the FIRST to use their specialized training, knowledge, experience and computer equipment/software to ascertain the caller’s emergency and location, BEFORE a police officer, paramedic or fire fighter can be dispatched. And do it all over the phone.

POLICE DEPARTMENT  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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RICK BLANGIARDI  
MAYOR

RADE K. VANIC  
INTERIM CHIEF

OUR REFERENCE AF-DK

March 31, 2022

**LATE**

The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Chair  
and Members  
Committee on Government Operations  
The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair  
and Members  
Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental,  
and Military Affairs  
State Senate  
Hawaii State Capitol  
515 South Beretania Street, Room 016  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chairs Moriwaki and Nishihara and Members:

**SUBJECT: Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 79 (S.C.R. No. 79) and Senate Resolution No. 72 (S.R. No. 72), Urging the Counties to Recognize 911 Emergency Services Dispatchers as First Responders in Their Respective Jurisdictions**

The Honolulu Police Department (HPD) supports S.C.R. No. 79 and S.R. No. 72, Urging the Counties to Recognize 911 Emergency Services Dispatchers as First Responders in Their Respective Jurisdictions, placing them rightfully alongside other protectors and guardians of the community.

HPD emergency response operators and police communications officers are very often the first public safety employees contacted in an emergency for people needing a law enforcement officer, firefighter, emergency medical services, or ocean safety personnel. They have a critical role that directly supports all first responders in the field and are essential for the daily operations of all public safety agencies.

The HPD supports S.C.R. No. 79 and S.R. No. 72, to further distinguish all public safety telecommunications personnel for their commitment and service to their organizations and the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rade K. Vanic".

Rade K. Vanic  
Interim Chief of Police

**LATE**

**SCR-79**

Submitted on: 3/30/2022 3:22:52 PM

Testimony for GVO on 3/31/2022 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Albert Battease	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am absolutely in favor of recognizing 911 Emergency Services Dispatchers as First Responders.

I am currently a Police Communications Supervisor that has been working in the Communications Division of the Honolulu Police Department for over 26 years. I can honestly say that dispatchers are without a doubt First Responders. We are the ones that take that initial call from frantic, excited and often times traumatized callers. Dispatchers are the ones that have to calm down the callers, extract vital necessary information to get the officers to the scene expeditiously with as much information possible to ensure public and officer safety. This is expected of our dispatchers regardless of their own emotions.

While dispatchers are not physically responding to scenes we are there emotionally, often times visualizing the worse. There is often no closure for the calltakers/dispatchers as they are busy moving on to the next call. However, emotional trauma builds over the years. I have personally been working when many tragedies have occurred. These include officer involved shootings, fatalities, critical incidents and even cases involving children. Whether taking the initial call or supervising these incidents they take a cumulative toll on our mental wellbeing. Two cases that have really affected me personally were the night that Officer Garrett Davis was rear ended on the freeway and killed and that fateful morning back in January 2021 when we had two officers ambushed and killed. You always ask yourself if there was anything else I could have done. There is no doubt that PTSD in this job is very real.

While not being given the designation of "Essential Workers" Dispatchers are designated as "Emergency Responders" and as such are required to report to work during natural disasters.

Honolulu Police Dispatch serves as the alternate to the State Warning Point for all weather related events.

This Bill recognizes dispatchers for what they do and who they are, First Responders.

Respectfully submitted.

Albert Battease

Police Communications Officer IV



**LATE**

**SCR-79**

Submitted on: 3/30/2022 3:29:46 PM

Testimony for GVO on 3/31/2022 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leila Battease	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have been a Police Communications Officer II at the Honolulu Police Department for 25 years. It is a fullfilling yet very stressful job. Everyday we can make the difference between life and death. We are truly first responders from the second we answer the 911 call & we should be recognized as such.

Thank you,

Leila Battease

**LATE**

**SCR-79**

Submitted on: 3/30/2022 4:35:32 PM

Testimony for GVO on 3/31/2022 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kathryn Howe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Kathryn Howe, and I am currently a Police Communications Officers I with the Honolulu Police Department. I am proud to say that I have almost reached my one year mark of working for the department.

Although one year of experience may not seem like enough, my experience with the department has emphasized that dispatchers are first responders and should be considered so by the state. Firstly, this job required months of background checks and training. The training itself took six months, which is similar to training of other positions considered as first responders.

Emergency call takers and dispatchers are quite literally the first individuals to learn about an emergency. As a call taker, I get all the vital information from callers who are in distress. It is important to get as much information as possible and necessary as this can affect how the officers respond as well as the amount of officers who do respond. The job also requires calming callers down, which can prevent further incidents from occurring.

It is not appropriate for a dispatcher to be considered a secretarial position. Dispatchers face more stress and their jobs can be quite literally the difference between life and death. Secretaries don't require thorough background checks that can take months on end, nor are they mandated to work overtime. Mandated overtime is required for dispatchers, as if there are not enough employees working, the response time to emergencies may be too long. Dispatchers are also required to come in during natural disasters and holidays, which further emphasizes the importance of the job. This position is vital to the agency and should be categorized as so.

Thank you,

Kathryn Howe

Police Communications Officer I

Honolulu Police Department

**LATE**

**SCR-79**

Submitted on: 3/30/2022 5:23:43 PM  
Testimony for GVO on 3/31/2022 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
MARSELLA EBERHARDT	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi my name is Marsella Eberhardt, I have been a Police Dispatcher for 27 years.

i support this bill and am hoping for it to be passed. Its way overdue. We should be considered First Responders. We are literally the first point of contact the public has when calling for Police. We take the calls and get the pertinent information to send the Policemen. During Natural Disasters who other than First Responders have to report to work? We do. So why shouldn't we be recognized for it.

Thank you,

Marsella Eberhardt, Police Communications Officer II

Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii

**Written Statement of  
Scott A.K. Sato  
Honolulu Police Dispatcher  
before the  
Senate Committee on Government Operations  
and  
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs**

**Thursday, March 31, 2022  
3:05 PM  
Conference Room 016 & Videoconference**

**In consideration of SCR 79 / SR 72  
URGING THE COUNTIES TO RECOGNIZE 911 EMERGENCY SERVICES DISPATCHERS AS  
FIRST RESPONDERS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE JURISDICTIONS**

**Dear Chairs Moriwaki and Nishihara, Vice Chairs Dela Cruz and DeCoite and Members of the Committee:**

I am a Honolulu Police dispatcher for the last 18 years and fully SUPPORT SCR79/SR72 to recognize 911 emergency service dispatchers as first responders.

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 who English is their second language and I need to determine how to assist. Many a day we take threatening and abusive calls.

During the COVID-19 pandemic we, like police officers put ourselves in danger. We work/worked in close proximity of others not knowing if they were exposed to the COVID-19 virus and were unable to utilize mask due to it smothering our voice during 911 calls.

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.

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.

**LATE**

**SCR-79**

Submitted on: 3/30/2022 5:28:39 PM  
Testimony for GVO on 3/31/2022 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Bertie Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

During times of crisis and disaster, 911 emergency services dispatchers are routinely designated as emergency responders and are required to report to work, while others are afforded administrative leave or the ability to work from home. As 911 emergency services dispatchers, our duties and responsibilities are vital enough to be required in times of need and should be recognized as just as vital on a daily basis.

I am a police dispatch supervisor with the Honolulu Police Department and have been a dispatcher since 2004. One of my worst calls occurred while I was still in the training phase in my first year as a dispatcher. I took a call from a female whose partner had just committed suicide. It was while I was on the phone with her that she realized that he was gone, and the sound of her heartbreak stays with me. Through the years, I have taken countless calls from those in times of need and crisis and even more from people who just need some help, be it with a neighbor being too loud or needing to make a report. Many times, we are not afforded the comfort of knowing the outcome of a call once we hang up. We have to move on to the next call and the call after that. Not only do we deal with the public, we are also the lifeline for our units on the road. From routine checks and requests to maintaining updates while they are chasing down a suspect, a dispatcher is the ears and documenter of all that occurs. As a dispatcher, you develop the necessary tools to cope with what you hear, but it is not something you ever forget. We are here seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day all year, ready to handle whatever is on the other side of the line once we answer the phone or transmission. We are the first to help those in need and should be recognized as the first responders we are.

**LATE**

**SCR-79**

Submitted on: 3/30/2022 8:46:38 PM  
Testimony for GVO on 3/31/2022 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chelsea Irvine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Chelsea Irvine, have been with the Honolulu Police Department since 2018. I'm writing on behalf of myself & other dispatchers in emergency services. I support this bill SCR79 & SR72, as we are indeed first responders.

As a Police Communications Officer II, we are the first to take calls for any type of emergency. When we answer the phone we have no idea what can be on the other line, a shooting, a stabbing, or just someone that needs help that got a flat tire on the freeway... We must obtain accurate information, descriptions, locations, all within seconds to help the person on the other line. We then must relay the information quickly, correctly & efficiently to help officers locate both the victim and/or possible suspects.

From an outsider's perspective, people think our job is simple... answer the phone. Yet, it's much more than that--there is a reason we are continuously short handed. This job isn't for everyone. The stress is overwhelming, taking calls day in & out and sending officers to high priority cases you know little about is unimaginable. We hear and pick up on everyone's stress and emotions, whether it be through callers over the phone or officers transmissions over the air. Do that continuously for 8, sometimes 12 hrs. It's far from easy.

Although we work short, get mandated into overtime hours, we all still continue to come to work daily to serve the public as essential employees, but lack recognition. We often feel we are the forgotten ones. Solely because we are not seen, but only heard. By passing these two bills (SCR79 & SC72) we will directly be respected as First Responders. It's time we are all acknowledged & respected as First Responders.

Thank you,

Chelsea Irvine

**LATE**

**SCR-79**

Submitted on: 3/30/2022 8:51:14 PM

Testimony for GVO on 3/31/2022 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dallas Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Police communication officers should be, without a doubt, considered first responders. We entail so many different tasks from picking up the phone to sending out the first wave of help – all while providing possibly life-saving instructions to our callers and officers. Dispatchers are the nucleus and quite literally the ‘first responder’ to any emergency. Being a dispatcher requires significant and lengthy training and competencies such as situational assessment skills and sound judgment, strong public and internal relations, teamwork and advanced multitasking skills are put to the test on a daily basis. Significant shortages of available, well-trained and experienced personnel can tip the scales of competency and place the agency and its employees at higher risk for liability when providing critical services to citizens and officers alike. Dispatchers know they save lives every day in ways that go far beyond just taking a phone call, as a switchboard or telephone operator, and logging it into a complex software-tracking system. For dispatchers working in the industry, the potential for reclassification is the first step in ensuring qualified people are on the front lines of an emergency and ensuring our communities safety.



**LATE**

**SCR-79**

Submitted on: 3/30/2022 8:20:26 PM

Testimony for GVO on 3/31/2022 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
HELEN	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

WHAT IS A “FIRST RESPONDER”? BY DEFINITION, IT IS SOMEONE DESIGNATED OR TRAINED TO RESPOND TO AN EMERGENCY. HOW ARE WE, AS POLICE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICERS, MORE COMMONLY KNOWN AS DISPATCHERS STILL NOT CONSIDERED FIRST RESPONDERS?

19 YEARS AGO I WENT THROUGH THE SAME PROCESSING AND BACK GROUND CHECKS THAT POLICE OFFICERS GO THROUGH TO GET TO THE ACADEMY. AFTER MAKING IT THROUGH THE SELECTION PROCESS, I SPENT AN ENTIRE YEAR TRAINING TO LEARN EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW IN ORDER TO BECOME A SUCCESSFUL DISPATCHER. I’D SAY THAT COVERS THE “DESIGNATED AND TRAINED” PART OF THE FIRST REPONDER DEFINITION.

IF ANYTHING WE AS DISPATCHERS ARE THE VERY FIRST RESPONDER. THE FIRST PERSON THE PUBLIC SPEAKS TO AT SOMETIMES THE WORST DAY OF THEIR LIVES. WE HAVE BEEN TRAINED TO REMAIN CALM AND GATHER THE PERTINANT INFORMATION NEEDED TO HELP THE CALLERS IN ANY WAY WE CAN. WE EXPEDITIOUSLY SEND THE CASES TO THE RADIO FOR QUICK POLICE RESPONSE, BECAUSE WE ALL KNOW THAT SECONDS LITTERALLY SAVES LIVES.

WE NOT ONLY NEED TO KNOW HOW TO TRIAGE A CALL, BUT WE ALSO NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE INS AND OUTS OF WHAT THE OFFICERS DO OUT ON THE ROAD TO ENSURE THEY ARE SAFE AT ALL TIMES. MULTI-TASKING AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL IS THE ONLY WAY ONE CAN EXPLAIN WHAT A POLICE RADIO DISPATCHER DOES. WE ARE THE ONES WHO GET THE AMBULANCE GOING, TOW WAGONS COMING, WARRANTS CONFIRMED SO ARRESTS CAN BE MADE, AND THE PUBLIC CAN BE SAFE.

I COULD GO ON AND ON, BUT AFTER 18+ YEARS OF SERVICE AS A POLICE RADIO DISPATCHER, I JUST HAVE WAY TOO MANY SELLING POINT ON WHY – WE SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED AS FIRST RESPONDERS.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME,

HELEN PRENTICE

POLICE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER II

HONOLULU POLICE DEPARTMENT

**LATE**

Aloha, My name is Ikaika Green and I have worked for the Honolulu Police Department for 11 plus years. When applying for the job of Police communications officer i had little or no idea of what to expect and what predisposed notions I had of how this job and the department worked as a whole were laughable. When I thought of a police dispatcher I has visons of a little old lady sitting in front of a rotary phone at the local substation filing her nails and taking calls one by one and writing notes for service for officers or some other homey notion of what dispatch was. And of course I was wrong, the longer I am here and the better I get at the job my realization of what we doing and how we hold the machine together only increases.

You must understand, we are the first contact with the public...we bear the full weight of whatever anger, stress or fear they are experiencing. We are there for the whole ride, yet our training allows us to channel what they give us into action. Where are you, what crisis is transpiring, what support is needed to get you that help as efficiently and quickly as possible. Equally important is all the forethought and experience juggling the needs and safety of our officers out on the road, the sifting of information they give us, what we are hearing, all while researching and getting the information they need in real time. It is hard to give you an example without telling some war story or experience which I have which will just sound trite or tacky...because at the end of the day I'm on to the next...that was that situation and the freight train that is public service doesn't slow for anyone.

I could tell you what we do and it would sound like white noise after a few sentences, yes we take calls for the public, yes we work radios and juggle cases and officers with four hands, yes I have six monitors, running twenty eight different pieces of software, three keyboards, a head set on and a multichannel speaker monitoring my coworkers at all times. I have to be able to be fluent in monitoring weather systems, NCIC criminal databases and doing any and all research needed at the drop of a dime. Every so often when the City assayers come in to decide whether or not we are worth our pay, we plug them in to a radio and their eyes go blank and usually the most we get is a stuttered "I don't understand what's going on". You aren't supposed to...that's what we are here for, that's what makes us good at what we do. Most importantly everything is in the now, all of our duties pertain to dealing with what is needed immediately, we adapt and roll with situations that are changing constantly and sometimes explosively. And if that's isn't the definition of first responder then I don't know what is.

Mahalo for your time,

PCOII Ikaika Green.

**LATE**

**SCR-79**

Submitted on: 3/30/2022 10:47:09 PM

Testimony for GVO on 3/31/2022 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brandi Yarnell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I have been in law enforcement for almost 18 years now and I cannot express just how vital our police dispatchers are to the community and to our police officers. Without their assistance, police officers would not be able to do their jobs out on patrol. Police dispatchers, 911 call takers, EMS dispatchers, HFD dispatchers are a key and integral component to all first responder functionalities and operations.

Although they may not be the eyes and boots on the streets, they are the patient, mindful ears, the calming voice, and the steady hands that provide the knowledge, reassurance, assistance, and constant support over the air. They too hear the trauma, the heart break, the screams, the cries for help, the gun shots, and various sounds that make their hearts pound with worry and heart ache. They too have to manage their stress and trauma from dealing with the daily cases of a person's "worst day of their life". They too have PTSD, lack of sleep due to the stress or mandated overtime, health issues related to the stressors of the job. As a peer support coordinator, I have seen first hand the trauma these dispatchers are constantly exposed to. Their job is not easy...and the things they hear are often times very difficult. They too need peer support just as much as the officers.

They too, are a such an important part of the law enforcement 'ohana...they are the heart and "guardian angels" over the air, helping to keep our first responders safe.

They are one of us, always have been, and it's about time that they are finally officially recognized as such, because as a first responder, I truly believe they deserve it and continue to earn it, day in and day out.

I humbly ask you to please give these brave men and women the title they rightfully deserve.

Mahalo,

Lt. Brandi Yarnell

**LATE**

**SCR-79**

Submitted on: 3/31/2022 3:47:33 AM

Testimony for GVO on 3/31/2022 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jessica LM Lafaele	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Jessica Lafaele and I am writing in **SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION (SCR79/SR72)**.

"The Homeland Security Act of 2002 defines the term "*first responder*" as "individuals who, in the early stages of an incident, are responsible for the protection and preservation of life, property, evidence, and the environment." Who better, by this very definition, can be considered a first responder than the dispatcher who is the start of everything – from picking up the phone to creating the record in the computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system with the very first keystroke to sending out the first wave of help – all while providing life-saving instructions. Dispatchers are the nucleus of any emergency event." *Content provided by CentralSquare Technologies via [GovThink.com](http://GovThink.com)*

**LATE**

**SCR-79**

Submitted on: 3/31/2022 3:43:14 AM

Testimony for GVO on 3/31/2022 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Daniel Netz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Daniel Netz and I have been a Police Communications Officer with the Honolulu Police Department for the past 19 years. I urge you to support this resolution to have us classified as "First Responders" in order to adequately recognize the work that we do. The job of a Police Communications Officer is very detailed. The training alone takes a full year to complete. Our job duties include answer emergency 911 calls, dispatching police officers to those calls for service, and keeping up to date the law enforcement files.

Currently we are classified as secretaries. When I am taking a highly intense call from a woman who was just abused by her boyfriend, I don't feel like a secretary. When I am taking a call about a critical car accident that just occurred, I don't feel like a secretary. And when I am on the police radio dispatching officers out to a bank robbery, shooting, or large affrey, I don't feel like a secretary.

"First Responder" status is just one step towards getting us the recognition we truly deserve for the work that we perform. Thank you for your time in reading my letter and I appreciate your support in approving this resolution. Thanks Daniel Netz

**LATE**

**SCR-79**

Submitted on: 3/31/2022 7:02:04 AM  
Testimony for GVO on 3/31/2022 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Bonnie Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I work as a Police Communications Officer II at the Honolulu Police Department. I fully support the senate Concurrent Resolution 79 and Senate Resolution 72.

Police Communications Officer is an attendance critical position which requires each of our three watches to have a minimum number of employees to operate. When this number falls below that requirement (due to sick calls, personal on vacation, injuries, etc.) the previous watch personnel would be mandated to stay an additional four hours. The number personnel would be determined by how many below the minimum the previous watch is. We are also required to be mandated to work during natural disasters. The most recent was August 2018 when Hurricane Lane was posing a threat to the island of Oahu. We were told to be prepared to stay at the main police station, possibly for days if oahu took a direct hit. I think this qualifies Dispatchers as First responders. Currently Dispatchers, like Police officers, having been running short on our watches. So the mandate situation has been occurring more often leaving our personnel overworked and stressed.

Besides the position being attendance critical, there are many duties that we perform that keep the public safe on Oahu. A dispatcher must call upon their experience and training to decipher what needs to be done to render aid to the caller within seconds of picking up the phone line and skillfully relay information to the Police Officers within our complex computer system.

The kind of stress that Police Communications Officers experience is not the kind of stress that everyday people deal with. It has been said that we experience PTSD. This results after years of helping callers and officers who are experiencing difficult situations. This goes on for hours, days, weeks, years and a career. Cumulative stress can affect work performance, work attendance, personal relationships and social relationships in addition to causing physical illness. A Police Dispatcher is a First Responder.

Police Communications Officers exhibit extraordinary communication and computer skills while under extreme pressure and still remain calm and do our job. We work short-handed and still make sure every call gets answered, every transmission from an officer gets acknowledged.

We are Police Communications Officers. We are Emergency Workers. We are First Responders.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Bonnie Kim

Police Communications Officer II



**SCR-79**

Submitted on: 3/31/2022 9:38:59 AM

Testimony for GVO on 3/31/2022 3:05:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie LaJeunesse	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chairs Moriwaki and Nishihara, Vice-Chairs Dela Cruz and DeCoite, and Honorable Committee members:

This year marks my eighteenth year as a member of the Communications Division at the Honolulu Police Department. During my time with the division a lot has transpired. There has always been talk of being essential workers but never designated as such. Yes, we indeed do report for duty during natural disasters, leaving our families and loved ones to take care of the public and officer safety.

We do not respond in vehicles. Our equipment comes in the shape of workstations with consoles full of computer monitors, keyboards, and mice. Our workshift is spent talking. Talking to the public, talking to officers in the field and in other divisions, and talking to other agencies in the interest of officer and public safety.

Most of the time we take that first notification of a person being shot, in a motor vehicle collision, a person attempting to jump off a freeway overpass, that structure fire, and the many countless scenarios that personnel on the road and the public report. We are the first in line with the information, then tasked with the responsibility to relay that information expeditiously in a comprehensive and precise manner. We have many computer applications to utilize along with a variety of verbal communication. We often make the split second decisions that save lives in a room with radios, computers, and phones before the information is broadcast to those that will physically respond to the scene to provide lifesaving services.

We are indeed first responders. We answer the calls to keep emergency personnel and the public safe. We thank you for allowing us to be heard on this important resolution and hope your committee will support it unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie LaJeunesse

HONOLULU POLICE DEPARTMENT

COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

**LATE**

**SCR-79**

Submitted on: 3/31/2022 4:18:52 AM

Testimony for GVO on 3/31/2022 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
HAUNANI APAO	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am Haunani Apao, Police Radio Dispatcher (PCO) for the Honolulu Police Department. I have been with the Communications Division for a little over 3 years. I would like to provide my testimony on bills SR72 and SCR79 for myself and peers alike to be recognized as First Responders.

I came from a medical background and assumed this role would just be like a typical call center you see on TV shows but was hugely mistaken. You are put through rigorous background and psychological checks the same as police officer, then a 1 year hands-on training program. Upon coming here, I did not have any idea the skill set and training that was needed until that first call then it all slowly made sense. We are the first contact the public has in any situation and could be a factor between someone life aor death.

Training gave me the foundation to begin any call however every call in itself is unique. We also service other agencies such as HFD, EMS, Ocean Safety, DO Care, Pearl Harbor, Sheriffs, Harbors, DLNR and OTS. We provide them with sending officers to co-respond with critical cases and or when the responders are fearful for their own safety. Everything we do must be done in a timely manner thus our motto, "Seconds Save Lives.". We are a hub, a network for all to call and are expected to have answers and or be able to direct them to whom they can get those answers from. Calls range from simple parking complaints then your next would escalate into a shooting. Skill and timeliness is vital in getting these callers the assistance they need in their time of need with our biggest factor in mind, keeping those responding safe. We have to be able to deescalate an already excited caller, control the direction of the call to get vital information on the scenario we are sending our first responders to.

Radio is a completely different aspect, like the public we are an officer's lifeline. Radio transmissions aren't always the clearest, outdated equipment, weather and or background noise factor in when being able to clearly understanding units in the field. Being timely in getting back-up, understanding and fulfilling requests made by the officers for theirs and public's safety such as stalled vehicles and or major accidents. We can never truly know what we are sending our officers to but always need to be ready. Like the routine nuisance complaint in Waikiki from a male they were familiar with, then turned into a multiple officer involved shooting. You hear the sheer panic in their voices. You yourself are scared for them and frantic in trying to get them all the help they need then left with radio silence. Your thoughts run wild and you panic for them thinking the worst scenario but still trying to remain calm and push through. You're then left in

the dark, never knowing the who's and why's, or any outcome. Not getting closure on a case you're invested in and just continuing forward because the cases never stop.

Our training, ability to multitask and be able to react in seconds to give persons vital information in an already high stressed environment is profound aspect in why I believe we deserve to be considered First Responders with our fellow brothers and sisters. Think of us as the heartbeat, without our passion to serve our community, compassion for our fellow brothers and sisters and willingness to continue honing our skillset everything surrounding us will most likely suffer.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Haunani Apao, PCO II

**LATE**

Honorable Senators,

I support S.C.R NO.79

I am in favor of S.C.R .79. I believe by elevating the status for Emergency Service Dispatchers this will recognize the employees for the important role they play in the safety of the citizen in each county. This will allow for much needed funding and training.

I have been a Police Communications Officer II, for Honolulu Police Department for twenty-two years. In my years of service, I have handled homicides, shooting, stabbing, home invasions, robberies, kidnapping, missing children, and an array of other type of cases. I receive calls for police service and need to determine what other types of service are needed at a scene whether it is fire, ems or other emergency service to co response. Police Communications Officers are the critical link between the public and the Police Officers.

During my year-long training, I have acquired specific skills to utilize during call taking and radio operations. I gather information from the caller, enter it into our system, and send to the radio operator in less than 1 minute. When receiving a call that is critical or time sensitive situation, I gather basic information to get police officers and other emergency services to the scene as soon as possible. Once support is on the way, I continue gathering suspect and weapon information which is critical for the safety of the Police Officers and other agencies responding. There are times when I stay on the phone with the caller during an in progress case. I have had calls from homicide suspects saying they had just killed someone, people threatening to jump off a building or overpass, children calling that a grandparent isn't breathing, and people that sees suspects in their homes. There are so many different cases we handle every day.

While working on the radio section, we need to maintain, the status between 15 and 50 officers. Depending on district and what type of incident is going on. You need to multitask, talk, type & listen all while units are talking and often running checks. We need to make sure all-important information is entered correctly and time stamped while it is occurring. We need to make sure you are giving responding officers any additional information that is coming in verbal or via computer message.

Police Radio Dispatchers work 24/7 365 days a year. We are consistently being forced to work mandatory overtime on top of the voluntary overtime, due to staff shortages. We have to work during all emergencies. These are a few that I have had to work thru, hurricane, tsunamis, earth quakes, island wide power outages, phone service outage, ballistic missiles attacks and current Covid -19.

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.

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

The Honolulu Police Department handles about one million calls for service yearly. The Communications center takes around 2000 calls a day. We have about one hundred and two Police Communications Dispatchers and about 36 openings.

Thank you very much for allowing me to submit testimony.

Lakea Tjomsland

[REDACTED]

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March 31, 2022

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Chair

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair

Senator Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair

I work as a Police Communications Officer II at the Honolulu Police Department and fully support the Senate Concurrent Resolution 79 and Senate Resolution 72.

Police Communications Officer is an attendance critical position which requires each of our three watches to have a minimum number of employees to operate as directed by command. When this number falls below that requirement (due to sick calls, personnel on vacation, injuries, etc.) the previous watch personnel would be mandated to stay an additional four hours. We are also required to be mandated to work during natural disasters. The most recent was on August 2018 when Hurricane Lane was posing a threat to the island of Oahu. We were told to be prepared to stay at the main police station possibly for days if Oahu took a direct hit. I think this qualifies dispatchers as first responders. Currently dispatchers, like police officers have been running short on our watches. So the mandate situation has been occurring more often leaving our personnel overworked and stressed.

There are many duties that we perform that keep the public safe on Oahu. A dispatcher must call upon their experience and training to decipher what needs to be done to render aid to the public within seconds of picking up the phone line and expeditiously relaying information to the police officers via our complex computer system.

The kind of stress Police Communications Officers experience is not the kind of stress that everyday people deal with. It has been said that we experience PTSD. This results after years of helping the public and officers who are experiencing difficult situations. This goes on for hours, days, weeks, years and a career. Cumulative stress can affect work performance, work attendance, personal relationships and social relationships in addition to causing physical illness. A Police Dispatcher is a First Responder.

Police Communications Officers exhibit extraordinary communication and computer skills while under extreme pressure and still remain calm and do their job. We work short-handed and make sure every call gets answered and every radio transmission from an officer gets acknowledged.

We are Police Communications Officers. We are Emergency Workers. We are First Responders.



Michael Kim

Police Communications Officer II

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]



The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Chair  
The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair  
Senate Committee on Government Operations

The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair  
The Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Vice-Chair  
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs

Re: SCR 79; SR 72 - Urging the Counties To Recognize 911 Emergency Services Dispatchers As First Responders In Their Respective Jurisdictions

My name is Fawn Kiyota. I have been at the Honolulu Police Department for 19 years, working as a Police Communications Officer.

I am wholly in support of SCR 79 / SR 72 – Urging the Counties to Recognize 911 Emergency Services Dispatchers as First Responders in Their Respective Jurisdictions.

Being a Police Dispatcher requires learning and honing a set of very specialized skills. We are required to perform under extreme pressure and circumstance, where single mistake could cost a life. Many times we are deeply affected by the things we hear over the phone or radio, officers in distress, to people begging for help in their dire situations. Our duties and obligations should be classified as "First Responder" duties, not "clerical". We are obligated to report for duty when disaster strikes, even on our day off. We are put in harms way, yet still carry the "clerical" title.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.



Fawn Kiyota  
Police Communications Officer II  
Honolulu Police Department