

Kyle Hall
Police Dispatcher - ENP
March 2026

Dear House Labor and Commerce Committee:

I am writing this letter in support of House Bill 234 along with House Joint Resolution No.38, and I urge the Alaska State Legislature as well as the United State Congress to formally recognize public safety telecommunicators as first responders. I am speaking on behalf of myself and not the Anchorage Police Department of Municipality as a whole.

My name is Kyle Hall; I am a 911 telecommunicator and police dispatcher for the Anchorage Police Department. I am entering my 9th year dispatching within 911, and I can confidently say that dispatchers are the “first” first responders.

Throughout my career, I have seen and heard my fellow first responders respond to calls and serve the public and be recognized for doing so, but so often dispatch is left behind in that recognition. Law Enforcement gets rewards for heroic acts, firefighters for saving lives, Paramedics for delivering critical care. Yet dispatch, the professionals who answered the call and sent them there in the first place often get left behind. Incident command is our scene until heroes can arrive to take over on scene; we provide instruction, coordination, clarity, for responding units to help maintain safety and ensure the scene gets an adequate response. Imagine a world where nobody was to answer 911.

Throughout my career I have spoken with victims of shootings, sexual assaults and violent crimes. I have stayed on the line with individuals performing CPR on loved ones. I have helped guide people in moments of extreme crisis including domestic violence, mental health emergencies, community unrest. I have counseled those of have lost loved ones, going through divorce or family issues. A 911 dispatcher wears many hats – crisis counselor, logistics coordinator, safety officers, and sometimes... a lifeline.

Public safety 911 telecommunicators are truly “the calm” in the storm. We are trained to remain calm in chaos, analyzing limited and rapidly evolving information to make critical and life-changing decisions under pressure. Under the incident command system framework currently taught nationwide, dispatchers are often seen as the first “incident commander” in any scene before a ranking official arrives on scene. Our role is foundational to every successful outcome. Without dispatch, there is no coordinated emergency response.

Moving towards First Responder re-classification is more than just a symbolic name change. It provides recognition, and helps us gain access to more training opportunities, wellness resources and retirement. It gains us a badge of honor that we already wear and helps us attract new dispatchers to the career. 911 has systemically nationwide had a shortage of staff for years, attracting new and qualified applicants needs to be a priority for our communities to function safely. Adding this benefit and recognition will help our dispatch centers do this.

I respectfully urge you to support HB 234 as well as HJR038. Recognizing public safety telecommunicators is a meaningful and necessary step in honoring the life-saving and important work that we do every day behind the headset. We are the backbone of every emergency response, the calm in the chaos, and the thin gold line. Please recognize us for doing so.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Kyle Hall, ENP

Police Dispatcher

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Frances Robinson | Dispatcher – 911 Telecommunicator
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March 9, 2026

House Community & Regional Affairs Committee Members:

I am writing this letter in support of House Bill 234 reclassifying emergency dispatchers in police or fire departments and state trooper offices as public safety first responders.

My name is Frances Robinson. I have worked in public safety for nearly 20 years and currently serve as a public safety telecommunicator with the Anchorage Fire Department in Anchorage, AK. We provide Fire/EMS services to the Municipality of Anchorage, including Chugiak, Eagle River and 20 miles south of Girdwood.

I was the call taker and managed the radio channel for a structure fire in which one of our firefighters became trapped. In the middle of chaos and overwhelming emotion, I remained calm, coordinated resources and supported crews as I worked the channel alongside firefighters during the harrowing rescue. This is beyond the scope of a typical office and administrative support staff, as we're currently considered.

I was the calm voice reassuring a teenager that help was on the way, providing instructions to keep herself safe, while trapped in her home while that was on fire. Sadly, the fire ultimately claimed her father's life. This is beyond the scope of a typical office and administrative support staff.

I have coached countless callers through CPR of loved ones and complete strangers. I have guided callers in bringing new, precious babies into the world. I have also answered the call for an abandoned deceased baby left alone in a park to be found by a bystander. This is beyond the scope of a typical office and administrative support staff.

I was the call taker when the roof collapsed on our local CrossFit gym, claiming the life of one person. I coordinated resources for multiple agencies while firefighters worked tirelessly to rescue the life of another. All the while, not knowing if our responders would face a secondary collapse, risking their safety. This is beyond the scope of a typical office and administrative support staff.

The 9-1-1 telecommunicators and dispatchers in our community are critically important public safety personnel. We are the first point of contact and only have our voice to try and reassure callers help is on the way. We rarely get closure. Once we hang up, we are immediately ready for the next crisis, often not getting the opportunity to process what we heard. Telecommunicators routinely make split second life-saving decisions in a dynamic environment. These traumatic events can lead to PTSD and emotional strain and depression from the high stress calls.

I respectfully urge you to support House Bill 234. This is a meaningful first step in reclassifying and honoring dispatchers for the life-saving role we play in our communities.

Respectfully,

Frances Robinson



Frances Robinson

911 Telecommunicator

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PulsePoint  

SUZANNE HALL

• Sterling, AK 99672

March 9, 2026

Dear Representative Hall,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 234, “An Act relating to emergency medical dispatchers; classifying dispatchers in police or fire departments and in state trooper offices as peace officers under the public employees' retirement system.”

I have served as a 911 dispatcher for 24 years and currently work as a shift and training supervisor. For nearly a quarter of a century, I have answered the worst moments of people’s lives—heart attacks, suicides, fires, domestic violence, serious accidents, and calls where children are in danger. In those moments, the voice they hear is mine. While we may not be physically present at the scene, we are the first point of contact for people in crisis – the specialized instructions we provide have tremendous impact on scene safety and outcomes.

With every call, public safety dispatchers carry a tremendous emotional burden. We help people through their most traumatic moments and guide them through lifesaving instructions while hearing the chaos, panic, and grief unfolding in real time. We stay on the line while someone takes their last breaths or while a family member desperately tries to save a loved one. Those sounds and experiences do not simply disappear when the call disconnects - we all have stories that would keep you up at night.

We not only provide vital services to our callers, public safety dispatchers are also a lifeline to the first responders in the field. Police officers, firefighters, and EMS crews rely on us for critical information, coordination, and constant support while they face dangerous and unpredictable situations. We track their locations, relay urgent updates, coordinate backup, and ensure resources are moving when seconds matter most. When an officer calls for help, when firefighters face rapidly changing conditions, or when medics are racing to save a life, dispatchers are the ones coordinating the response and making sure help reaches them. In those moments, we are not just supporting the public—we are protecting the responders as well.

Over time, this constant exposure to trauma leads to compassion fatigue and cumulative stress. Dispatchers experience many of the same mental health challenges faced by other first responders including anxiety, burnout, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress including PTSD yet we are classified as clerical employees and as are subject to the same work requirements in PERS. This is unacceptable.

Public safety dispatchers are not simply call takers—we are highly trained professionals who make critical decisions in seconds. We triage emergencies, coordinate police, fire, and medical responses, and provide lifesaving instructions before responders ever arrive.

HB 234 acknowledges the reality of the work we do and the toll it takes. Classifying dispatchers within police and fire departments and state trooper offices as peace officers under PERS would recognize the essential role we play in public safety and the sacrifices made by those who dedicate their careers to this profession.

After 24 years of service, I have seen firsthand how important this recognition would be—not only for myself, but for the many dedicated dispatchers who work long hours under immense pressure to keep our communities safe.

I respectfully and enthusiastically support HB 234 and thank you for your continued advocacy on behalf of Alaska's public safety dispatchers.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,
Suzanne Hall
911 Shift/Training Supervisor
Soldotna Public Safety Dispatch Center
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