

February 14, 2022

SB182 "An Act establishing the crime of interference with emergency communications."

The Alaska Joint Chapter of APCO and NENA support this legislation. Too often, communications centers are plagued with disruptions that this legislation formally criminalizes. In the past, law enforcement has attempted to use other statutes such as harassment, false reporting, and disorderly conduct, in an attempt to stop the interference when it occurs. Often, these efforts are dismissed by prosecuting attorneys because of the ambiguity of these statutes. This act clarifies and removes these type of acts as related to emergency communications.

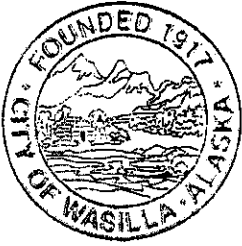
This legislation provides a clear legal statute to arrest individuals for interference of emergency communications.

- (1) Interference is defined as repeated telephone calls to an emergency communications center when they are told to stop calling. This section describes a person who calls 911 repeatedly, tying up resources that could prevent a report of an actual emergency, or cause a delay in answering and dispatching an emergency call, or interrupting the provision of emergency instructions to a person experiencing an emergency.
- (2) Interference is defined as repeated emergency communications, knowing that there is not a police, fire or medical emergency. This section describes a situation where a caller repeatedly reports a false emergency to effect a response, tying up resources, or diverting resources to a particular area. These communications can be called "swatting" and have been used to divert law enforcement away from a geographical area so crimes can be committed knowing that there will be a delayed response.
- (3) Interference is defined as using obscene language during an emergency communication with the intent to intimidate or harass an emergency communication worker. No worker should be subjected to this type of abuse. It simply should just not be tolerated. Emergency Communications workers do not have the ability to just hang up, or block a caller. They are obligated to stay on the line long enough to affirmatively determine that no emergency exists, and then tell the caller to cease and desist calling, see item one above.
- (4) Interference is further defined as interfering with, disrupting, or blocking emergency communications between the emergency communications worker and police, fire, or medical services. This could include the destruction of infrastructure such as antennas on a radio transmitter, a power supply, or other infrastructure that is used in emergency communications.

All of the above are essential to fortify the ability of emergency communications and augment state and federal statutes designed to ensure a protection of emergency communications. The Alaska Joint Chapter of APCO and NENA represents over 150 emergency communications professionals and approximately 40 communications centers in the State of Alaska.



Joel Butcher, President Alaska Joint Chapter



CITY OF WASILLA

MAYOR GLENDA D. LEDFORD

290 E. Herning Avenue
Wasilla, AK 99654-7091
Phone: (907) 373-9055
Fax: (907) 373-9096

February 11, 2022

RE: City of Wasilla Letter of Support - Senate Bill 182 - An Act Establishing The Crime Of Interference With Emergency Communications

To Whom it May Concern,

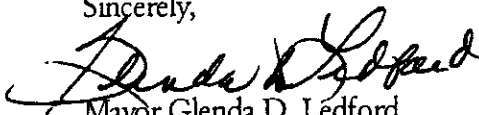
The City of Wasilla is in full support of proposed Senate Bill 182 "*An Act Establishing The Crime Of Interference With Emergency Communications.*" This legislation will restrain abuse of our 9-1-1 system and further assist in dispatching emergency resources in the most efficient fashion possible.

Repeat offenders who misuse our 9-1-1 system place an unnecessary burden upon operators and can lead to crucial delays in emergency resources and responses for actual emergencies. By instating regulations for interference with emergency communications it will aid in protecting our dispatchers and call takers while allowing them to be more effective.

Senate Bill 182 clearly outlines the violation of interference with emergency communications. The repeated misuse will be recognized as a criminal act of interference as well as identify offenders who: knowingly and repeatedly place 9-1-1 calls to report an issue which has already been reported; place repetitive calls to 9-1-1 when a true emergency does not exist; harasses and/or threatens a 9-1-1 dispatcher; and/or recognizes an individual who disrupts communications between 9-1-1 dispatchers and first responders.

Therefore, I am in full support of proposed Senate Bill 182 to prohibit interference with emergency communications and to aid in preventing abuse of our 9-1-1 system operations and efficiency.

Sincerely,


Mayor Glenda D. Ledford
City of Wasilla

Cc: file



MAYOR
Dave Bronson

ANCHORAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Headquarters
716 W. 4th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
Phone: (907) 786-8500 / Fax: (907) 786-8638



CHIEF
Michael Kerle

February 11, 2022

Senator David Wilson
Senator Peter Micchiche
Senator Mike Shower
State Capitol
Juneau AK, 99801-1185
Via E-mail: Senator.David.Wilson@akleg.gov, Senator.Peter.Micchiche@akleg.gov,
Senator.Mike.Shower@akleg.gov

RE: Support for SB182 Interference with Emergency Communications

Dear Senators,

As Chief of the Anchorage Police Department (APD), Alaska's largest law enforcement agency, I am writing in strong support of proposed legislation, SB182 Interference with Emergency Communications, which is being submitted to the State of Alaska for consideration. This legislation will help curtail blatant abuse of our 911 system and help dispatch emergency resources to those in need in the quickest manner possible.

I am very concerned by the misuse of our 911 system by repeat offenders. APD dispatchers deal with callers who knowingly abuse the system by calling repeatedly for the same non-emergencies and harass the call takers with vulgar words. When our dispatchers are occupied dealing with these types of callers, there is a potential for delay in the ability to answer calls for true emergencies, which can lead to a delay in emergency resource response. For these reasons, I fully support and encourage the legislation to prohibit interference with emergency communications, SB182, be written into law.

Respectfully,

Michael Kerle

Michael Kerle
Chief of Police

Cc: Amy Foraker, APD Emergency Communications Center Manager




MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Department of Emergency Services Office of Emergency Management

1800 East Parks Highway • Wasilla, AK 99654

Phone (907) 861-8004 • Fax (907) 861-8014

www.matsugov.us

To: State of Alaska Legislative Committee
From: Casey Cook, Emergency Manager 
Re: Support for SB182 Interference with Emergency Communications
February 11, 2022

Dear Senators,

As the Emergency Manager for the Matanuska Susitna Borough Department of Emergency Services, I would like to take this opportunity to relay our support for the above mentioned SB182 Interference with Emergency Communications. This legislation will help curtail blatant abuse of our 911 system and help dispatch emergency resources to those in need in the quickest manner possible. Working in close partnership with the MatCom dispatch center, we see abuse and misuse of the emergency communications system regularly, and would like to support a mechanism for combating this abuse and misuse.

When misuse and abuse occur on the emergency communications system, this affects not only call takers and dispatchers, but also affects other emergency callers trying to report actual emergencies, as well as affecting our 1st responder agencies. This can be seen in increased call answering times, call processing times, dispatching and response times, all of which are unacceptable when seconds count. For these reasons, I fully support and encourage the legislation to prohibit interference with emergency communications, SB182, be written into law.

Please consider supporting and passing SB182, and be written into law so as to codify the seriousness of this abuse, and allow for action to be taken to combat this serious issue.



4001 Denali Street, Suite 200
P.O. Box 230330, Anchorage, AK 99523
907-561-7500 | www.apdea.net

August 30, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Sergeant Jeremy Conkling, and I am the President of the Anchorage Police Department Employees Association (APDEA). In my capacity as President, I represent over 560 members of the Anchorage Police Department, which is the largest law enforcement organization in the State of Alaska.

Interference with Emergency Communications, also described as the misuse, abuse, and disruption of 911 dispatch centers, is a problem that severely impacts public safety and emergency response. Delaying the response of our police officers, firefighters, and EMS personnel when it matters most is a public safety risk to all Alaskans.

The APDEA strongly supports the proposal to add Alaska Statute 11.61.805 into law in order to allow 911 telecommunicators to focus on doing their best to assist with legitimate emergencies and ensure that our first responders arrive as quickly as possible when they are needed most.

Respectfully,

Sergeant Jeremy Conkling

APDEA President



Alaska Association of Chiefs of Police

PO Box 3734

Seward, Alaska 99664

Letter of Support

September 22, 2021

To Whom it May Concern:

The Board of Directors for the Alaska Association of Chiefs of Police would like to lend their voice of support for the effort to develop a more comprehensive and affective statute to help deal with the abuses we are seeing to our 9-1-1 telecommunication systems. Each agency represented on the board, and those we represent statewide, have seen the problems that arise when the public abuse this vital and important lifesaving communication system.

Adding these important layers of protection for our dispatchers and call takers is critical and will help them be more effective and will help stop the repeated abuse of our staff. Adding more substantive language to the criminal code will bring it inline with other areas of the country. The proposed changes are long overdue, and we want to support this statewide initiative to fix the current statute.

If there is anything we can do to further our support, please feel free to contact me at (907)488-6902 or email us at AACOP@AACOP.ORG.

Thank you for your time.

Chief Steve Dutra

President, Alaska Association of Chiefs of Police

WPDEA

Wasilla Police Department Employee Association

February, 11th 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to write a letter in support of the proposal of SB182 Interference with Emergency Communications being submitted to the State of Alaska for consideration.

As an Emergency Dispatcher at Matcom, and the current Vice President of the WPDEA, I can attest firsthand having been on duty during more than one instance of 911 being misused. Words cannot convey the frustration of 911 emergency resources being directed or delayed in a non-emergent situation due to the misuse of 911 while someone else is in a real emergency elsewhere.

In conclusion, the WPDEA fully supports the efforts of Mr. Butcher, and everyone else involved, as they seek to have SB182 approved and written into law.

Respectfully,



Justin Shoemake – Emergency Dispatcher
Vice President WPDEA



Jeff Sheveland – Patrol Sergeant
President WPDEA



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Office of the Borough Manager

350 East Dahlia Avenue • Palmer, AK 99645

Phone (907) 861-8689 • Fax (907) 861-8669

Mike.Brown@matsugov.us

February 14, 2022

The Honorable David Wilson *Via email:* Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov
State of Alaska, Senate District D
State Capitol Room 121
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Letter of Support for Senate Bill 182

Dear Senator Wilson:

In response to a request for comment from Matcom Dispatch, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough supports Senate Bill 182 establishing the crime of interference with emergency communications in support of emergency dispatch centers. Consequences for limiting disruptions or delays caused by repeated 911 calls will improve, or at least ensure, we are prioritizing precious, limited resources to necessary emergencies.

Thank you for bringing Senate Bill 182 forward.

Sincerely,


Michael Brown
Borough Manager

cc: Mayor Edna DeVries
Ken Barkley, Borough Emergency Services Director
Jacob Butcher, Matcom Dispatch Communications Manager

Providing Outstanding Borough Services to the Matanuska-Susitna Community

February 15, 2022

The Honorable Senator David Wilson
State Capitol, Rm 121
Alaska Senate
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Subject: SB 182 "An Act establishing the crime of interference with emergency communications."

Dear Senator Wilson,

I have been an Emergency Dispatcher for the last 14 years and I want you to know that myself and my coworkers are strongly in support of Senate Bill 182.

Over the past few years, we have seen an increase in the number of incidents where unhappy callers have taken out their frustration on our Dispatch Center causing undue duress to an already stressful environment. There are very few days that we go through in Dispatch where people are not already upset with us because of either the outcome of a call or the time it takes law enforcement to respond to a call. People want an immediate response 24 hours a day and with the understaffed Police and Trooper Departments that is not always possible.

This last July 4th we endured more than 85 phone calls over an 8 hr period of time from an extremely hostile male expressing his anger with Dispatch and the State Troopers, many of those calls coming in during a 2-hour period of time every 8 to 25 seconds. The male was screaming and yelling profanities and threatening Dispatch and anyone who would respond to his residence. These 911 calls just added to the already overloaded Dispatchers from the almost 500 calls that we experienced that Holiday. Our Center averages about 300 calls per day on any normal summer day.

Where this was an extreme instance there are many other instances where we encounter highly volatile people who take out their frustrations on Dispatch and make it their mission to continue to harass our department by repeatedly calling 911 just to prove a point or disrupt the center. Not only does this add preventable stress to the Dispatchers but it creates a Public Safety issue by tying up multiple 911 lines where Dispatch must continuously place people on hold to answer unnecessary incoming 911 lines. Your support in this matter would be greatly appreciated by myself and my coworkers. Our job is highly stressful and adding these experiences on top of our daily stress can be overwhelming to say the least.

Enacting this bill will be the first step in curtailing this type of behavior and adding another layer of protection for not only the public whom you represent but also your Dispatchers and First Responders who take care of them.

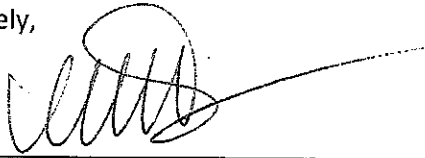
The Honorable Senator David Wilson

February 15, 2002

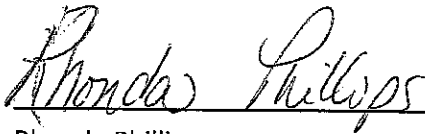
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Thank you for taking the initiative to put together this bill and bring it to the attention of the Legislature. We greatly appreciate your support in this area.


Sincerely,



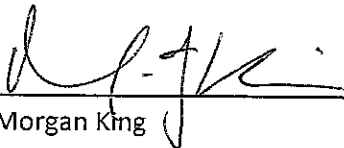
Michele Lecours
Emergency Dispatcher/Terminal Agency Coordinator
Matcom Public Safety Dispatch



Rhonda Phillips
Shift Supervisor
Matcom Public Safety Dispatch



Millie Avoleta
Shift Supervisor
Matcom Public Safety Dispatch



Morgan King
Emergency Dispatcher
Matcom Public Safety Dispatch