



Board of County Commissioners

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April 26, 2021

The Honorable Michael Bennet
United States Senate
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC, 20510

Dear Senator Bennet,

We are writing on behalf of our local 911 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) or 911 Center, known as "Vail" by our public safety agencies, to request your support of "H.R. 2351: To require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to review and make certain revisions to the Standard Occupational Classification System, and for other purposes." H.R. 2531, or the "911 Saves Act" as it's known colloquially, would require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to review and make certain revisions to the Standard Occupational Classification System that would classify 911 Dispatchers as Protective Service Occupations with the other public safety agencies who are tasked with protecting our communities.

As the 911 system has evolved so have the dispatchers' duties. The work is extremely stressful and has an emotional and physical impact, worsened by the around-the-clock requirements of public safety. Dispatchers must handle the stress of answering thousands of calls each year - one call after another, daily - often being the reassuring voice on the other end of the call as citizens experience the worst day of their lives. In 2020 alone, approximately 12,246 calls were initiated for medical and fire emergency services wherein dispatchers provided instructions and guidance. Of those calls, 66 were cardiac arrests, 39 structure fires, 37 mental health/overdose, and 8 childbirth calls. In addition, Vail Public Safety Communications Center Emergency Dispatchers handled 119,878 calls for service for Eagle County's four law enforcement agencies, varying from parking problems to stabbings and suicides. Dispatchers processed these calls at the same time they strived to keep their fellow emergency responders safe in the field.

The Homeland Security Act of 2002 defines "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." On April 6, 2021 the Eagle County Board of Commissioners recognized the critical role that the Vail 911 Center plays in our community and agreed that their actions go far beyond administrative functions of merely relaying information. We recognize that 911 dispatchers are truly First Responders and request that you prioritize the passing of H.R. 2351 to properly categorize the actions of 911 dispatchers and what they do to keep all our communities safe.

Sincerely,

Matt Scherr

Chair

Jeanne McQueeney

Commissioner

Kathy Chandler-Henry

Commissioner