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To whom it may concern,

My name is David Morris, and I am the Assistant Communications Manager of the St. Mary's County 911 Center. I am writing to strongly urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 148.

For years, 9-1-1 specialists have been the "first" first responders, often handling the most critical moments of a crisis before a single unit arrives on the scene. Yet, despite the immense mental and emotional toll of this profession, our specialists have often been excluded from the retirement benefits afforded to their colleagues in the field. SB 148 fixes this disparity by allowing retired 9-1-1 specialists to access a \$15,000 income tax subtraction modification.

In our center, we see firsthand the challenges this bill addresses:

- 9-1-1 specialists process emergency requests, perform critical support functions, and dispatch law enforcement, fire, and EMS. This bill formally recognizes 9-1-1 specialists as "public safety employees," aligning them with the correctional officers and firefighters they work alongside every day.
- The 9-1-1 industry is currently facing significant vacancy rates across the state. Providing this tax relief for those who commit a career to public safety—reaching the age of 55—is a vital tool for retaining the highly trained experts who keep our residents safe.
- The trauma endured by 9-1-1 specialists is unique and persistent. Acknowledging this service through a retirement tax benefit is a small

but necessary way for the State of Maryland to say that their health and their future matter.

The "Supporting Our 9-1-1 Specialists Act" is a fair and common-sense expansion of existing law. It ensures that those who answer the call for Marylanders in their darkest hours are not forgotten when they reach retirement.

I respectfully request a favorable report on SB 148.

Respectfully submitted,

David Morris