



City Union of Baltimore

Local 800, AFT, AFL-CIO

President

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**Written Testimony from City Union of Baltimore, AFT Local 800
Submitted by Antoinette Ryan-Johnson, President, CUB
SB 633 – Public Safety – 9-1-1 Emergency Telephone System – Alternations
Before the Senate Finance Committee
March 8, 2022
SUPPORT**

Good afternoon Chair Kelley and members of the Senate Finance Committee.

My name is Antoinette Ryan-Johnson, and I am the President of the City Union of Baltimore, the union representing thousands of Baltimore City employees, including the employees who are 9-1-1 center call takers and dispatchers. On behalf of these employees, we call for a favorable report for SB 633, the bill that would correctly classify 9-1-1 operators as emergency first responders.

By any definition, 9-1-1 call center specialists and dispatchers are truly the first responders whenever a member of the public encounters an incident that calls for an emergency response. Our members are professionals—going through extensive training that gives them the skills needed to help work with a resident to identify the type of aid that is necessary to address the emergency. They literally are the first public employees trained to respond whenever a member of the public experiences an emergency. Unfortunately, they are not yet recognized as emergency first responders in state law right now. This bill, if enacted into law, would correct that mistake.

Members of the committee, our city's 9-1-1 operators are a vital, and in a literal sense, primary, component of our public safety response systems. Without their vital work, residents in need of emergency public services would not be able to efficiently receive the services they require. As such, they deserve to be recognized as first responders, just as are the other key employees of our public emergency services. Again, City Union of Baltimore calls for a favorable report to SB 633. Thank you.

“Strength in Unity”

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