

SB749: Public Safety 3-1-1 Systems – Non-emergency Information

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Position: Favorable

Good afternoon and thank you for your time. I am Susan Greentree, and I was a 9-1-1 Specialist in Anne Arundel County for over 35 years. I worked 26 years for the police department & my last nearly 10 years in fire communications.

The job of the 9-1-1 Specialist of 1985 vs 2022 is vastly different. The population in Anne Arundel alone has increased over 48%. Maryland as a whole is up 38%. Add to that implementation of cell phones, and the call volume in Maryland 9-1-1 Centers has grown exponentially more than the population growth. Yet in MD PSAP's today, the staffing levels have remained nearly unchanged. **Without a doubt, we have not kept up with call volume growth.**

If you are having a medical emergency, your home is on fire, or someone is breaking into your home, you NEED your call answered immediately. The fact that there has been an accident on 695 and the cars have pulled to the shoulder, but 15 calls are flooding 9-1-1 so you're left sitting in queue for the next available operator is not ok. This happens **all the time**, through no fault off the PSAP. At Anne Arundel if I answered a 911 call that was not an emergency and other 911 lines were ringing, I place the caller on hold and take that next 911. It may be an emergency. So not only has the caller with an emergency been delayed a bit, but I have another caller on hold. All around, its not good customer service for citizens of Maryland. It is a system problem-- a system that is out of touch with today's needs.

Maryland NEEDS a statewide 3-1-1 system to take the burden of non-emergency calls off 9-1-1 Specialists so they are available to immediately answer the calls related life and property emergencies. Citizens call 9-1-1 for parking complaints, loud noises, animal complaints, destruction of property, other government resources.... the list goes on. I believe 3-1-1 can be that resource for those who need our help, but their problem is not an immediate emergency.

3-1-1 is also an opportunity for 9-1-1 Specialists who are dedicated to their career, but the effects of all the traumatic calls they have listened to and helped citizens through have taken a toll on them. Whether it be the ability to shift to that position for a period of time or transfer permanently to 3-1-1, it allows high trained dedicated 9-1-1 Specialist to continue in their career. If 3-1-1 had been available when I was retiring 2 years ago I likely would have looked to move to 3-1-1 rather any retire and find another job.

I urge a favorable report on SB749

