



Testimony of the Mayor and Council of Rockville
HB 13 – Income Tax – Subtraction Modification – Public Safety Employee
Retirement Income (Supporting Our 9-1-1 Specialists Act)
SUPPORT

The Mayor and Council unanimously support HB 13, which expands eligibility for the public safety retirement income subtraction modification to 9-1-1 specialists. We are thankful to Delegate Vogel for sponsoring this important legislation in support of our highly dedicated 9-1-1 first responders.

Currently, eligible law enforcement, fire and rescue service staff, and emergency technicians and paramedics are entitled to this benefit. 9-1-1 responders are the first point of contact for individuals in crisis. These staff are instrumental in ensuring that those in distress quickly receive police, fire, and emergency services. Further, they are critical connection points to life saving and emergency response services. By including 9-1-1 specialists in the definition of “emergency services personnel,” HB 13 provides access to a well-deserved benefit currently available to other retired public safety professionals.

The City of Rockville’s dispatch system is integrated with Montgomery County. While the County 9-1-1 dispatch conducts most of the emergency call intake, some individuals initially contact the City police. In Rockville, we have talented staff that provide a variety of dispatch services. While the County handles most of the calls, City Police dispatchers receive calls from individuals in crisis, determine the severity of the issue, and send it to the County when the situation is deemed an emergency. Additionally, our staff provide dispatch services to bring law enforcement, fire and rescue, and emergency medical services personnel to a scene as needed.

In recent years, these public safety professionals have worked very long hours in response to higher call volumes and to provide support to individuals with increasingly complex needs. These are highly stressful jobs and turnover is common. We’ve seen staffing shortages across the State in recent months. HB 13 could serve as recruitment and retention tool for these essential positions.

While 9-1-1 and public safety dispatchers are not seen by those in need of emergency services, they are the voice of the public. They are steadfast professionals that provide essential community services that help save lives and prevent tragedy. These staff are truly the unsung heroes of public safety. For these reasons, we urge the Committee to provide HB 13 with a favorable report.