

911 SAVES Act, H.R. 1629 and S. tbd

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Senator Richard Burr (R-NC) & Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)

Endorsed by: APCO, NENA, AFSCME

Summary

This bill directs the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to update their classification for public safety telecommunicators as a protective service within the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) catalog.

Background

Federal agencies rely on the SOC, a vast catalog of occupations, for statistical purposes. The OMB maintains the SOC. Occupations are supposed to be classified according to the nature of the work performed. However, the current version of the SOC categorizes Public Safety Telecommunicators as “Office and Administrative Support Occupations,” which includes secretaries, office clerks, and taxicab dispatchers.

OMB recently conducted a revision of the SOC but failed to appropriately update the classification of Public Safety Telecommunicators. We believe this is based on an outdated, misinformed view of the work performed, and this must be changed. Public Safety Telecommunicators should be categorized as “Protective Service Occupations,” which includes a broad range of “protective” occupations: lifeguards, fish and game wardens, parking enforcement workers, firefighters, and even playground monitors, among others.

OMB is clear that the SOC is designed and maintained solely for statistical purposes. Thus, reclassification is about getting Public Safety Telecommunicators the recognition they deserve for the work they do every day to protect and save the lives of the public and first responders. Additionally, including Public Safety Telecommunicators in the Protective Service group would make the SOC a more accurate and therefore more useful statistical resource, and would also better align the SOC with related classification systems.

This is a zero-cost legislative fix to reclassify Public Safety Telecommunicators as “Protective Service Occupations” in the SOC. This change has broad support from the 9-1-1 community and others familiar with the lifesaving work of Public Safety Telecommunicators. It’s good governance, and it’s a much-deserved recognition for the 100,000 Public Safety Telecommunicators in our country.

Section-by-Section

Sec. 1 Short Title

- “Supporting Accurate Views of Emergency Services Act of 2019” or the “911 SAVES Act.”

Sec. 2 Findings

- This section lists various facts about public safety telecommunicators such as the nature of the work, the high stress situations faced, and the value they provide to first responders.
- This section also notes how the SOC is used and the rationale for the change made by 911 SAVES Act.

Sec. 3 Review of Standard Occupational Classification System

- No later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, OMB shall categorize public safety telecommunicators as a protective service occupation under the SOC.