

Testimony in Support of SB 128

Good afternoon committee members. My name is Kathleen (Kit) Flanagan-Clark and I have spent over twenty years as a law enforcement dispatcher/telecommunicator. I encourage you to support Senate Bill 128. This bill will give the ability to attract and retain qualified applicants, as well as be competitive with other agencies. So much time and energy is spent training new hires only to have them leave for another agency (with better pay and benefits.)

The workload is unique and is very comparable, if not better, to a 911 center. There are many different functions requiring dispatchers to have specific knowledge in order to triage a call and refer to the appropriate trooper. For example, we are tasked to facilitate fish and wildlife calls and, at times, provide direction for the caller. We also facilitate explosive calls, criminal calls, crimes against children, etc. Many times these calls initially come through a 911 center and are transferred. In addition, we are tasked to monitor troopers in multiple counties, transport and BLM/ODF units, as well as answer phone calls to enter information into a computer-aided dispatch system. In one county we are responsible for handling all county and 911 calls seven days a week, 12.5 hours a day. This is yet another increase to an already heavy workload.

There is a high turnover rate. We have never been fully staffed and too many times are asked to work in conditions where the workload can be too much to handle and still provide the quality of service to the citizens of Oregon, troopers and the other law enforcement agencies we work with. This contributes to an increase in "burnout" which leads to an increase of sick leave use.

Please support SB 128.

Kit Flanagan-Clark
Oregon State Police Officers Association