

## Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 128

Chair Dembrow and Members of the Senate Workforce Committee:

I have been a public safety dispatcher (tele-communicator) for 17 years. I would like you to keep something in mind while you're listening to and reading through testimony. Only 3% of the population is capable of multi-tasking at a public safety dispatch level. Only 3 people out of 100 have the ability to micro-prioritize multiple tasks while taking additional audio and verbal information in concurrently. Are 3% of people employed as tele-communicators? Of course they are not which dwindles this percentage even further.

One can read any public safety dispatch trade publication (such as APCO – Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials) to know staffing is challenging, to say the least, in most communication centers across the country. Working understaffed is a chronic problem for a variety of reasons: inability to recruit and hire qualified applicants, new employee turnover, job stress, a requirement to work weekends, nights, and holidays, working extended shift hours, mandatory overtime on scheduled days off, as well as burnout (which is 2-7 years into the job). The Oregon State Police suffer these same staffing issues with an additional hurdle of a lower salary range. Experienced Oregon State Police tele-communicators routinely resign after obtaining a position with a higher-paying agency. Many agencies offer incentive pay in addition to a base rate. Oregon State Police does not. Oregon State Police has fallen behind Oregon industry standards regarding pay, an average of 26%.

With Senate Bill 128 we're not asking to give Oregon State Police dispatch a competitive edge. We are asking to level the playing field a little in order to mitigate high turnover which is wasting Oregon dollars. If Oregon State Police does not rise to meet the "wage" road, as it were, they will continue to be unable to compete effectively and efficiently with other agencies both in and out of state. It's those agencies who will hold the lion's share of the 3%.

Please support Senate Bill 128.

Respectfully,

Shelby A. Day  
Oregon State Police Officers Association