

I am writing to show support for this bill and my fellow first responders - my dispatch family. We absolutely deserve to be recognized for the important work we do. We are the first ones to answer the cry for help. The first voice of calm and reason. We are the people who bridge the gap and get people from their worst moment - the life changing ones to the next. We are there WITH them. Speak with any dispatcher regarding their strongest memories from their career and it will not be the moment they were yelled at, given an award or even worked a shift where they had enough sleep first! They remember the moments that changed lives. The callers and ours.

For me, I can tell you a time I spoke with someone for 45 mins who didn't see a reason to live anymore. I listened to him attempt to shoot himself, only for the gun to jam. We spoke longer - until he successfully shot himself through his face. Amazingly, he survived and his mother sent me a letter - telling me her son credits the dispatcher, me, for saving his life. He remembered my name. He went on to get further professional help and live a happy life. He came so close to losing it all that day but he didn't because of our conversation - he hesitated enough to miss all vital parts of his face. This is not the work of a secretary.

Another forever memory - a CPR call. Honestly, CPR calls barely phase us anymore. Step back and think about that. Someone calls to tell us their loved one is dead. They are not conscious and not breathing. We jump in, give calm, stern instructions and count repeatedly. These calls are incredibly traumatic for the caller but for us, it's a day at work. Until it isn't. Until one hits differently. I was lucky enough to meet a couple of my survivors - one was a very kind gal who runs a vet clinic. While there, I noticed an employee looking at me intently. I said hello to her and she immediately said "you were the dispatcher, weren't you?" I was taken aback - we aren't seen, how would she know? She said she was the caller for this incident and she recognized my voice. We had a couple minute conversation, months earlier, but she could pick my voice out of a crowd. That's pretty amazing. She told me she heard my counting in her dreams and couldn't think me enough for supporting her during this terrifying moment.

Obviously, I could go on. This job is not for everyone and we have lost multiple really talented dispatchers to PTSD in just the last two years. This job wears on you. On your heart, soul and your mind.

Thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts and I hope you chose to acknowledge the work we do.