



AFSCME STANDS WITH 911 EMERGENCY DISPATCHERS 119th CONGRESS

Public safety officers are dedicated public employees who perform critical and often dangerous jobs protecting our communities. AFSCME is proud to represent nearly 100,000 public safety personnel in over 40 states, including police, corrections, EMS and 911 emergency dispatchers. AFSCME fights for better pay and benefits, expanded bargaining rights, safer work conditions, and to uphold the standard of professionalism for the men and women in these fields.

911 Supporting Accurate Views of Emergency Services Act (911 SAVES)

Background

Rep. Norma Torres (D-CA), who was an AFSCME member when she worked as a 911 emergency [dispatcher](#), introduced the bipartisan 911 SAVES Act ([H.R. 637](#)) in recognition of the crucial role of 911 emergency dispatchers.

This bill would change how the federal government officially categorizes the work of 911 dispatchers. Currently, the federal government classifies 911 emergency dispatchers as doing “Administrative and Clerical” work in their occupational data collection. AFSCME believes this classification is wrong and that it does not accurately capture [or respect](#) the central role, duties and responsibilities of emergency dispatchers. It also undermines access to training and other services typically provided to those in public safety jobs. The 911 SAVES bill would change the emergency dispatchers’ job classification to a “Protective Service Occupation,” which is used for other public safety occupations.

AFSCME supports the 911 SAVES Act because 911 emergency dispatchers deserve respect and recognition for their part in protecting the public. They provide first responders, law enforcement, and emergency medical services personnel with vital information before entering a potentially dangerous or unknown situation. Moreover, 911 emergency dispatchers give lifesaving information, including how to administer CPR and access crisis intervention services. They respond to calls from the public on criminal activity, domestic violence, terrorism, kidnapping and other public safety concerns.

Rep. Torres and AFSCME have championed this bill – with support from Democrats and Republicans – since 2017. In September 2025, the Senate passed the Enhancing First Response Act (S. 725), which is a broad telecommunications bill that includes the 911 SAVES Act. S. 725 passed the Senate unanimously. Now, AFSCME is strongly advocating that the House of Representatives pass this legislation as soon as possible so that it can be signed into law by the President.

Impact

S. 725 recognizes the essential role of 911 emergency dispatchers. While S. 725 does not guarantee access to public safety officer benefits, mental health services or training, the improvement in data collection that this bill achieves is a critical first step toward those goals.

“As a former 9-1-1 dispatcher, I know how important it is for dispatchers to have the training and resources they need to successfully do their work and help save lives. Dispatchers are the first line of response during an emergency, and they deserve to be classified in a way that recognizes that their work is on par with that of other public servants classified as first responders. Given the challenges facing 911 dispatchers, I have continued to champion the 911 SAVES Act in Congress, which would reclassify dispatchers as emergency personnel. This bill will give public safety dispatchers the recognition they rightfully deserve, and I will keep fighting for its passage.” *Rep. Norma Torres (D-CA)*

“The services provided by our 911 operators and dispatchers are integral to the safety of every community across America. I thank Rep. Torres for her leadership in championing this crucial legislation that will give our public safety telecommunicators the recognition they rightfully deserve.” *Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA)*

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*Department of Federal Government Affairs
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AFSCME’s 1.4 million members provide the vital services that make America happen. With members in communities across the nation, serving in hundreds of different occupations — from nurses to corrections officers, child care providers to sanitation workers — AFSCME advocates for fairness in the workplace, excellence in public services and freedom and opportunity for all working families.