

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing this letter in support of a change in Retirement Coverage for Dispatchers. I started as a 911 Dispatcher 8 years ago and I love what I do. I work with a great group of people who have a very specific set of skills in what they do. They are very passionate about their jobs, their community, and the Law Enforcement and First Responders they work with.

There are very few people who are even capable of being a 911 Dispatcher. It takes the ability to handle stress, to be organized, to think and act quickly and responsibly, to be empathetic, it takes common sense (something that's getting harder and harder to find these days), it takes someone who can handle the physical demands of being in one spot for 12 hours, working all night long without dozing off, or being ordered in at a moment's notice to cover minimal staffing requirements. It takes someone who can handle multiple calls on the worst moments of people lives, and then doing it again and again. The screams of a wife being beaten, the cries of a mother holding a lifeless child, the silence of a depressed teen who intends on ending their life, or maybe the silence following a gunshot from one who has... these are not uncommon calls for us dispatchers to deal with while we sit helplessly on the phone trying to provide a glimmer of hope for the caller that we have help on the way or that they are not alone. All day and night, we work right alongside the Law Enforcement and Corrections officers, who respond to some of these incidents, to make sure their jobs are safer and easier. All of our positions are unique, all are essential, and ALL are stressful.

I am a Certified Training Officer in our Dispatch Center. In the past 8 years I have seen many people come and go. It is tough to find young people with young families who are willing to take on our demanding schedule. It has been just as difficult finding experienced, seasoned help who are willing to deal with it! Just like Law Enforcement and Corrections, we have to work nights, weekends, and holidays. Our bodies and our families pay a price for that. We miss baseball games, and dance recitals, we miss church, we miss weddings, graduations, and family reunions. We give up a lot to be here protecting the community on their weekends and nights off. I can't imagine being in my 60's, after 35 years of doing this, and knowing I have to keep waking up to work for the entire night while I've watched countless coworkers of mine retire and go on to enjoy their life's years before me. I don't know if I'll be able to do it anymore? We are in the "golden handcuffs" here, there are no transfers, no promotions, no higher position, only Dispatchers with varying years of service under our belts working to put our time in and advance in steps until we can retire our Badges.

10-7

Signature redacted

911 Dispatch

Kandiyohi County Sheriffs Dept.