Dear [Senator’s Name],

As the heart of the public safety system, public safety telecommunicators are the common thread that binds together the various disciplines responsible for keeping our communities and its citizens safe. They are the first point of contact for citizens in need of police, fire or rescue and are responsible for acting quickly during times of traumatic, and sometimes even horrifying, strife in a person’s life.

Not only do public safety telecommunicators act as the catalyst in sending out critical resources, they are also accountable for providing life-saving instructions to callers in need of those resources. As part of the public safety family, public safety telecommunicators help keep their brethren safe by gathering information paramount to the safety of physical responders. The roles and responsibilities of an public safety telecommunicator are multitudinous, all of which are impactful to the physical responders, communities, citizens and travelers across the state of Iowa.

Although public safety telecommunicators answer a combined 1.1 million calls across the state of Iowa, a number that sees increases every year, they are able to continue to rise to the occasion, thanks to the ongoing training and certifications earned through their hard work. Among the training and certifications are Emergency Medical Dispatch (CPR, choking, childbirth, bleeding control, etc.), Emergency Fire Dispatch (helping trapped victims escape burning buildings, helping someone get out of a sinking vehicle, keeping citizens away from hazardous situations until physical responders arrive), Emergency Police Dispatch (gathering information on robberies, accidents, keeping domestic violence victims safe, talking down suicidal callers, etc.). Other training includes Hostage Negotiations, Hazardous Materials, Active Shooter, Incident Command and training from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

It is evident that public safety telecommunicators provide more than just administrative support to the agencies and communities that they serve, they are an integral part of the public safety system - they are the heart. It just makes sense that 9-1-1 Dispatchers earn the title to be redefined as first responders. They are the first, first responders.

I live and work in [City Name] as a [Title] with [Name of Organization]. In my role, I see and experience devastating situations as a first, first responder [Or Supporter of One]. The 911 Center staff are an integral part of your local public safety communications team, serving as the first point of contact and assisting through the process of an emergency call. [Insert a personal story of an experience you have had as a first responder].

I ask that you please support public safety telecommunicators across the state of Iowa by supporting SF2243 to define and classify 9-1-1 dispatchers as first responders.

Best Regards,

[Your Name]

[Position and Phone]