

To the Select Committee on Pension Policy and Staff,

I am writing as an E9-1-1 telecommunicator regarding two concerns of which I would like to make the committee aware.

I have enclosed a copy of a recently completed study addressing the potential for and incidence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in E9-1-1 Telecommunicators (study attached). This study speaks to the emotional toll on telecommunicators in terms of listening to the stressful and sometimes atrocious incidents and the incidence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder among E9-1-1 telecommunicators.

Speaking from a personal perspective, I handle calls such as these on a daily basis. I am currently able to leave work and set that aside, but am concerned that that may not be case for my entire career. I know from personal experience and that of my co-workers that the calls build in an individual's mind and that I may be subject to Post-Traumatic Stress at some point in my career. My concern is that if and when that happens I will no longer be capable of serving in a position where exposure to such incidents is an expectation.

In addition to apprehension regarding the impact of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder I am concerned regarding the impact of Washington State's implementation of Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1), a move toward fast and detailed technological change, on myself and my co-workers. I am convinced that the technical expertise required to perform the functions of the job will increase astronomically. With the added technical demands required of me to support NG9-1-1 video, text, etc., will be flashing the scene of tragedy with all its graphic impact on my screen as I am attempting to be the voice of reason while remaining calm and in control of an already horrific event for the callers. I believe the additional visualization of crime, medical, and fire scenes will add untold stress to the intricacies of an already detailed and technical position.

I truly love my job. It is fully my intent to serve as a public safety telecommunicator for my entire career. That being said, I feel it is imperative that the Selection Committee on Pension Policy consider the inclusion of telecommunicators in a public safety early retirement program. An early retirement option may assist those who have served in this position for twenty or more years and can no longer withstand the stress of the job or perform the functions of the position, to be able to retire with dignity and in appreciation of the years they have devoted to supporting the public safety responders and citizen of Washington State versus having to leave employment in disgrace because we are no longer able to do the job after the toll the years will have taken. I urge you to give us this opportunity and I hope you will recognize the expertise and skill required by telecommunicators to perform the duties expected of them by granting our classification with the option of early retirement.

Thank you for your time,

