



Chairman Wilson, Vice Chairman Hackett, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Senate Financial Institutions and Technology Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding Senate Bill 50 on behalf of the Ohio Chapter of the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (Ohio APCO). My name is Matt Franke. I am the Communications Section Commander for the Butler County Sheriff's Office and serve as the 911 Coordinator for Butler County.

APCO International has over 36,000 members from all aspects of public safety communications. The Ohio Chapter represents the telecommunicators, technicians, supervisors and managers who staff every Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). These dedicated public servants provide that critical link between the public and the emergency responders every hour of every day. Ohio APCO also represents many of the county coordinators who ensure the PSAP Operational Standards are met, and the Wireless Government Assistance Funds are spent appropriately. We are 911.

Ohio APCO has always taken a strong leadership position in advocating for the improvement and modernization of the 911 system. In 2012, we testified in favor of House Bill 360 that would have done just that. I shared a scenario then that my daughter, a student at Ohio State, could take a picture of a person who had committed a crime and send that photo to her brother, a navy diver stationed in Guam, but she couldn't send it to 911. She could send it to the other side of the world, but she couldn't send it down the street.

Today, that same situation sadly still exists. In a decade of constantly changing technology, the 911 network has not changed at all. Technology changes so quickly that it is nearly impossible to stay current; but 911 in Ohio is way behind even the most reasonable of expectations. Our current 911 network still operates as it did when introduced in the 1960's. This system is comprised of copper wire lines that are incapable of transmitting the data packets currently used by nearly everyone to communicate with everyone else; everyone but 911 that is.



911 centers have been forced to use third party applications to improve their service to the public; but not the same applications, and not every center. These applications require additional hardware, software, subscriptions, licensing and training; and that all costs more money. So, counties are forced to make hard decisions on how to spend their limited funds.

911 in Ohio is currently a patchwork of disparate levels of service; variances that cause confusion for people travelling between counties. Most counties that currently receive Text-to-911 do so on a separate application; and most counties don't even support Text-to-911. In fact, today you are unable to text during an emergency in over half of our counties. Next Generation features, including Text-to-911, should be available to all Ohioans.

Senate Bill 50 would replace the existing 911 network in its entirety by leveraging the existing OARNet IP based fiber optic network to create a state of the art public safety grade ESINet. This new network will finally allow us to share more information, such as name and location, with 911; information the public already assumes we receive. The ability to share this data will provide more information more quickly in an emergency. Ultimately, this translates into quicker response times and better-informed emergency responders.

We are well past the time for a technology upgrade to 911 service in Ohio; that was true in 2012, and its even more true today. Our older generations have all but abandoned the old technology, and we have two entire generations who have never used it. That is, of course, unless they have had to call 911.

Ohio APCO has a seat on both of the ESINet subcommittees: the PSAP Operations Subcommittee and the Technical Subcommittee. We served on the joint subcommittee tasked with identifying the local cost for all of our counties to achieve Next Generation 911 service within five years. This group systematically reviewed the various components needed and used current expenditures of counties to determine an appropriate surcharge amount to recommend to the ESINet



Steering Committee. That recommendation of 39 cents per month additional was accepted.

SB 50 will do more than just replace our 911 network. It also brings all 911 centers under one set of standards, regardless of what device initiates the call or how that call is delivered. Currently, most standards only apply to 911 calls placed by wireless phones. For example, Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) protocols are not required if you place your call from a wireline phone at your home or workplace. EMD has proven to be a life saver in countless situations when a telecommunicator provides specific medical instructions while the caller waits the arrival of an ambulance. It shouldn't matter what phone or device a person uses in an emergency; everyone should receive that lifesaving help.

Ohio APCO is committed to improving 911 service in Ohio. Our members have been involved in various working groups for the ESINet Steering Committee just as we did for the Ohio 911 Council under the PUCO. We have provided assistance and local expertise to the 911 Program Office in such areas as the RFP review, the PSAP Operating Standards update and the 988 implementation planning.

Ohio APCO supports the need for a Next Generation 911 system for Ohio. Our comments here are more cautionary than critical. We acknowledge that 911 service, so dependent on technology, will always be required to adapt and change. We support SB 50 which will provide the 911 service our citizens deserve; a 911 service that many of them think we already have.

Thank you, Chairman Wilson and members of the committee, for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Contact:

Matt Franke

[mfranke@butlersheriff.org](mailto:mfranke@butlersheriff.org)

513-200-8096

