



CONNECTICUT STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

March 4, 2010

Senator Andrea Stillman, Co-Chair Public Safety & Security Committee

Representative Stephan Dargan, Co-Chair Public Safety & Security Committee

Subject: **SENATE BILL #312**

The Connecticut State Firefighters Association (CSFA) wishes to go on record as having some concerns with the concept provided by **Raised Senate Bill #312, AN ACT MANDATING THE REGIONALIZATION OF PUBLIC SAFETY EMERGENCY TELECOMMUNICATION CENTERS**. Our Association represents approximately 27,000 career and volunteer firefighters in the State of Connecticut.

I must mention at the beginning that our Association is not new to regionalization. The CSFA continues to be very much involved in Connecticut's Regional Fire Training Schools. Before the advent of the Office of State-wide Emergency Telecommunications (OSET) and the E-911 emergency telecommunications system in Connecticut, the CSFA was very much involved with the original seven Regional Dispatch Centers. Funding for both the regional fire schools and the dispatch centers were administered through our Association. Also, the Fire Service has been using both oral and written mutual-aid agreements, a form of regionalization, for many decades. We encourage the concept.

However, this bill has generated interest from all aspects of our membership and their comments are from "HOORAY" to "OH NO". Along with almost all of these comments comes the statement, "But what about....." In other words, there are many concerns on all sides of the issue. They range from: The word MANDATE opens the door to WHO will pay for the infrastructure changes?; will they be increasing the 911 surcharge; what happens to the 911 surcharge funds that are collected from a municipality that does not regionalize?; will they exempt PSAPs that answer at least a certain number of calls on their own?; only three years?; there is currently funding to incentivize consolidation, but is there enough?

We are sure that the initiator of S.B. #312 has given these issues some thought. We would request allowing for any further questions that could arise from municipal dispatch centers. We would not suggest that any of these items cannot be overcome. We would only inquire if three years is enough time to address them.

Regardless of their choices, we would hope that no municipality would be denied any of the benefits of the E-911 Telecommunications Fund. There has to be better ways to encourage consolidation other than denial of these benefits. This could lead to a breakdown of Connecticut's very successful E-911 system as it exists today.

THE CITIZENS OF CONNECTICUT WILL BE THE LOSERS

We thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ted Schroll, Legislative Representative
Connecticut State Firefighters Association