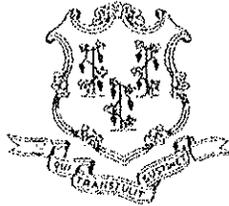


STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

James M. Thomas
Commissioner

Lieutenant Edwin S. Henion
Chief of Staff

February 15, 2011

Rep. Stephen Dargan, Co-Chairman
Sen. Joan Hartley, Co-Chairman
Public Safety and Security Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

**SB 888 ACT EXEMPTING CERTIFIED POLICE OFFICERS FROM TELECOMMUNICATOR
TRAINING**

The Department of Public Safety opposes this bill.

This proposed bill would exempt police officers certified by the Police Officer Standards and Training Council and certified as medical response technicians from telecommunicator training.

The knowledge and skill set required for emergency telecommunications are very specific and may not be incorporated into police officer and medical response technician (MRT) training. E9-1-1 training includes hazardous materials awareness, telephone and radio technology and broadcast rules, resource allocation and fire service operations which are not covered to the degree necessary for emergency telecommunications. Certification and demonstration of proficiency ensures that standards are met and 9-1-1 calls are answered, processed and dispatched appropriately.

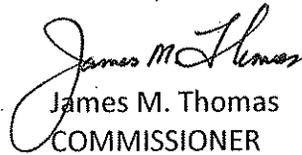
Additionally, the demonstration of proficiency protects the public as well as first responders. The Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications (OSET) recognizes that some of the training modules may be included in police officer or MRT training and offers an exception by OSET if competency in emergency telecommunications is demonstrated. This exemption does not preclude officers trained at POST from seeking exemption.

It is in the best interest of Connecticut as well as to protect officers and first responders from lawsuits by ensuring adequate training in emergency telecommunications. Lawsuits and media reports of "bad calls" are newsworthy and receive a great deal of public attention. We owe it to the public and all responders to ensure anyone answering E9-1-1 calls is trained to the standards set forth in our regulations.

The committee should be aware that the Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications and Education and Data Management in conjunction with state police staff compared telecommunicator certification training to POST training. Several critical modules were identified as being insufficient training for emergency telecommunications. Redundant curriculum was eliminated and the six day training was pared down to a day and one half for certification of police officers in emergency telecommunications.

It is in the best interest of the public and all public safety personnel to require that any person responsible for answering E9-1-1 calls be required to successfully complete the training program or to demonstrate proficiency in emergency telecommunications.

Sincerely,


James M. Thomas
COMMISSIONER