

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO



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Rich Canazzi
President

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Re: Support for Legislation Establishing an Optional 25-Year Retirement Plan for Public Safety Dispatchers and Emergency Communications Personnel.

On behalf of AFSCME New York Council 66, I am writing in strong support of legislation that would establish an optional twenty-five-year retirement plan for certain public safety dispatchers, public safety telecommunicators, 911 operators, communications officers, police communication technicians, emergency services operators, and emergency services dispatchers employed by the State, counties, and municipalities.

These dedicated public employees serve on the front lines of our emergency response system. While they may not always be physically present at the scene of an emergency, they are often the first point of contact for individuals experiencing some of the most frightening and life-threatening moments of their lives. They answer 911 calls, gather critical information, dispatch police, fire, and emergency medical personnel, and provide essential assistance until help arrives.

The work is demanding, stressful, and carries significant responsibility. Dispatchers and emergency communications personnel routinely deal with traumatic situations, life-and-death decisions, and the emotional strain that comes with assisting people during their worst moments. Their work is an indispensable component of public safety and deserves to be recognized accordingly.

Providing an optional twenty-five-year retirement benefit acknowledges the unique demands placed upon these employees and provides them with a meaningful retirement option after a full career of dedicated public service. It also recognizes the importance of maintaining a strong and experienced emergency communications workforce and can assist municipalities and the State in recruiting and retaining qualified personnel.

AFSCME Council 66 represents thousands of hardworking public employees throughout New York State, including workers who provide essential services to our communities. We understand firsthand the dedication and sacrifices made by public servants who keep our communities safe and functioning every day.

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We respectfully urge support and advance this important legislation. Those who spend twenty-five years answering the call when others are in crisis have earned the opportunity to retire with dignity and security.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued support of New York's public employees and the essential services they provide.

Respectfully,

Rich Canazzi

President

AFSCME New York Council 66