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S.4003/A.3003 (Executive Budget Proposal)

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<p>BILL</p> <p>S.4003/A.3003 (Executive Budget Proposal)</p>
<p>SUBJECT</p> <p>Aid to Localities: New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services</p>
<p>SUPPORT</p>

The Executive Budget – Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services Aid to Localities Bill (A.3003/S.4003) – appropriately includes \$20 million to assist counties in their transition to Next Generation 911 (NG911). The Business Council of New York State strongly supports S.4003/A.3003.

Our organization applauds Governor Hochul for recognizing that there is an urgent need to modernize the State’s emergency-response systems by implementing NG911 technology. Governor Hochul understands that technology has significantly advanced with the use of wireless devices and texting, and our 911 centers need to be updated to be fully functional and reactive.

We respectfully encourage state Lawmakers to approve this proposal and consider future support for this system. In addition to the \$20 million in funding, the legislature could also recommend that the state undertakes an expanded role in the management of the 911 system by building and operating an Emergency Services IP Network (ESInet) system to support counties in their historical role of managing 911. With NG911, the sharing of multimedia for emergency response is possible through an NG911 ESInet system. Because ESInet systems allow for the transmission of high-bandwidth files, citizens in need can share potentially life-saving information with 911 operators through additional means such as real-time text messages, voice messages, voice-to-text-messages, video streaming, and photo streaming. This increase in situational awareness would enable 911 personnel to respond to emergencies more effectively, resulting in more accurate data sharing between dispatchers and first responders, and potentially more lives saved.

We also praise the Governor for the increased accessibility that this proposal would help create. Expanding the ways in which citizens can effectively communicate with emergency services takes important steps toward overcoming communications barriers that can negatively impact response times or the quality of care. Differences in language, difficulties with speaking, medical emergencies, and other factors can strain how effective a phone call can be in an emergency. Providing dispatch workers and those in distress with more tools to share information is a significant part of addressing accessibility issues in our current infrastructure.

When an emergency occurs, getting vital information to first responders at the right time can save lives. Investments in NG911 are vital, as they will also improve dispatchers' ability to manage call overload, mitigate the harm caused by natural disasters, and improve transferring 911 calls and proper jurisdictional responses based on location tracking.

We respectfully ask New York State to continue to lead in emergency response communications and provide support and guidance for interoperability across the state. New York residents deserve their peace of mind knowing that our 911 system is resilient, reliable, and functional. Please help save lives by voting in support of this proposal.