

Hearing on HB20-1293  
Senate Finance Committee  
June 8, 2020, SCR 357

- Bill Levis, volunteer legislative advocate for AARP Colorado and its 670,000+ members
- Consumer Counsel representing residential, small business & agricultural consumers in energy & telecom proceedings before Public Utilities Commission 2009-2013; consumer advocate on FCC Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service and interim director of National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates
- AARP supports the original version of HB20-1293 that updates the monthly surcharge for 9-1-1 emergency service and imposes a state surcharge as the service transitions from analog to internet to provide for texting and video calls
- However, AARP opposes the amendment to section 2, specifically to §29-11-101(7) on p. 5, ll. 10-27, and p. 6, ll. 1-5 of the reengrossed bill that limits “basic emergency service” the PUC regulates to the aggregation and transportation of 9-1-1 calls
- 9-1-1 calls are composed of three components:
  - The originating consumer call from a landline, cell/mobile or internet-based (usually cable) line
  - The aggregation and transportation of the emergency call through the basic emergency service provider, currently CenturyLink, and
  - The completion of the call through the appropriate public safety answering point
- Even though the PUC continues to regulate 9-1-1 after the 2014 deregulation of most state telecom services, telecom companies have argued that only aggregation and transportation are regulated
- In so doing, telecom companies contend the FCC provides regulation to protect consumers
- Nothing could be further from the truth
- In signing 2014 telecom deregulation bills, Gov. Hickenlooper emphasized that “testimony in both chambers by the sponsors of this bill reinforce **the intent of this legislation is to maintain the PUC’s authority to regulate basic emergency services, regardless of technology.**”
- Per rule 47 CFR §4.9, the FCC only oversees 9-1-1 consumer complaints when at least 30 minutes and 900,000 telephone minutes could be affected. That’s the equivalent of 15,000 customers impacted for 60 minutes each.
- Most outages are much less but still impact consumer 9-1-1 service

- When CenturyLink in Denver was down for nearly 37 hours in December 2018 impacting 9-1-1 for 17 million customers in 29 states, the FCC in its August 2019 findings only gave the company a slap on the wrist
- Congress has made it clear at 47 U.S.C. §253(b) that states can still regulate 9-1-1 service
- For these reasons, AARP urges that the amendment to §29-11-101(7) at p. 5, ll. 10-27, and p. 6, ll. 1-5, be removed from HB20-1293
- Thank you

## **HB 20-1293—Anthony Scorzo Testimony Senate Finance Committee, May 6, 2020**

My name is Anthony Scorzo and I am a member of the Communications Workers of America Local 7777. I am a Century Link technician here in Colorado. Part of my job is to make sure that the critical infrastructure is in place in order and working properly.

I know first-hand how crucial it is to have systems in place to connect people to emergency services. I am part of a team of private and public sector workers who together keep 911 systems functioning. I know that our emergency services are not free; they require resources and investment. My union, the Communications Workers of America, strongly supports House Bill 1293 which would create a new, passthrough statewide 911 surcharge.

This bill will save Coloradans' lives. The surcharge would enable our local 911 centers to upgrade to the Next Generation 911 technology, build urgently needed network redundancy, and invest in equipment, personnel and training. 911 is a service all Coloradans rely upon and we all want to know that calling 911 will connect us with emergency assistance when we need it. Without House Bill 1293, our 911 Centers face a life-threatening funding crisis which will impact the safety of all of us.

A survey conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that nearly 70% of respondents indicated they would be willing to pay more for expanded 911 services. Coloradans are willing to pay for a better 911 system -- **and it is our position that we should get what we pay for.** All telecommunications customers in our state should be able to report 911-impacting phone service interruptions to the Public Utilities Commission—a right that does not currently exist.

Furthermore, as we invest in our emergency communications systems, there must be transparency to make sure all telecommunications providers promptly notify public safety answering points and the Public Utilities Commission about outages that affect the ability of an end user to connect to 911. **The PUC should play an important role in coordinating 911.** With 59 local 911 authorities and 82 individual PSAPs around the state, consumers would be better served if the PUC was given stewardship to collect and coordinate information about 911 response. Otherwise, it's just a bunch of puzzle pieces without being about to systematically address the big picture.

Telecom is an essential service which requires coordination, transparency and state oversight. Currently only CenturyLink is required to work with the PUC on addressing outages though there are plenty of other carriers with outages. We know from the PUC's most recent "State of 911 Report" that Wireless/ VOIP customers make up over 90% of calls to 911. It's an issue of consumer fairness if these customers are denied a place to go to address their service issues.

We strongly urge you to support House Bill 1293 and to strengthen measures in the bill to secure the safety of Coloradans by assuring accountability and transparency for these crucial services. Coloradans should pay for better 911 services and we should get what we are paying for. Strengthening and passing House Bill 1293 will save lives.

We appreciate Sen. Gonzales & Sen. Coram for presenting this important piece of legislation and the committee for the opportunity to testify. Thank you.

## **HB 20-1293—Sandra Parker Murray Testimony Senate Finance Committee, May 8, 2020**

My name is Sandra Parker Murray and I am a member of the Communications Workers of America Local 7777. I work for Avaya, a phone system provider, here in Denver. Part of my job is to provide telecommunications customer support to 911 Call Centers, also known as Public Safety Answering Points. These 911 Public Safety Answering Points are the link between people facing emergencies and the assistance they need.

I know first-hand how crucial it is to have systems in place to connect people to emergency services. I am part of a team of private and public sector workers who together keep 911 systems functioning. I know that our emergency services are not free; they require resources and investment. My union, the Communications Workers of America, strongly supports House Bill 1293 which would create a new, passthrough statewide 911 surcharge.

This bill will save Coloradans' lives. The surcharge would enable our local 911 centers to upgrade to the Next Generation 911 technology, build urgently needed network redundancy, and invest in equipment, personnel and training. 911 is a service all Coloradans rely upon and we all want to know that calling 911 will connect us with emergency assistance when we need it. Without House Bill 1293, our 911 Centers face a life-threatening funding crisis which will impact the safety of all of us.

As we invest in our emergency communications systems, there must be transparency to make sure all telecommunications providers promptly notify public safety answering points and the Public Utilities Commission about outages that affect the ability of an end user to connect to 911. Many other states, including South Dakota, Texas, Nevada, Washington and California, require this very thing. Texas requires reporting for any component of the 9-1-1 system that results in an outage to the 9-1-1 service if the interruption lasts 4 or more hours. In Nevada, that requirements starts at 30 minutes. And in South Dakota, telecom companies are required to report an interruption in 911 service immediately upon discovery, and provide the public safety answering point, the local area news media, and the commission with a time estimation on when the repair to the 911 system will be completed and the 911 service restored.

We strongly urge you to support House Bill 1293 and to strengthen measures in the bill to secure the safety of Coloradans by assuring accountability and transparency for these crucial services. Coloradans should pay for better 911 services and we should get what we are paying for.

Thank you, Sen. Gonzales and Sen. Coram for sponsoring this life-saving legislation.