

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS**

**Seventy-Ninth Session
March 15, 2017**

The Committee on Government Affairs was called to order by Chairman Edgar Flores at 8:35 a.m. on Wednesday, March 15, 2017, in Room 4100 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4404B of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda ([Exhibit A](#)), the Attendance Roster ([Exhibit B](#)), and other substantive exhibits, are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/79th2017.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblyman Edgar Flores, Chairman
Assemblywoman Dina Neal, Vice Chairwoman
Assemblywoman Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod
Assemblyman Chris Brooks
Assemblyman Richard Carrillo
Assemblyman Skip Daly
Assemblyman John Ellison
Assemblywoman Amber Joiner
Assemblyman Al Kramer
Assemblyman Jim Marchant
Assemblyman Richard McArthur
Assemblyman William McCurdy II
Assemblywoman Daniele Monroe-Moreno
Assemblywoman Melissa Woodbury

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Maggie Carlton, Assembly District No. 14



STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jered McDonald, Committee Policy Analyst
Patricia Keyes, Committee Secretary
Cheryl Williams, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Julie Butler, Chief, General Services Division, Department of Public Safety
Denise Stewart, Carson City Center Manager, Communications Bureau, General Services Division, Department of Public Safety
Mike Sherlock, Executive Director, Peace Officers' Standards and Training Commission
Boe Turner, Bureau Chief, Professional Development Bureau, Peace Officers' Standards and Training Commission
Robert Roshak, Executive Director, Nevada Sheriffs' and Chiefs' Association
A.J. Delap, Government Liaison, Office of Intergovernmental Services, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
Ronald P. Dreher, Government Affairs Director, Peace Officers Research Association of Nevada
Marlene Lockard, representing Las Vegas Police Protective Association Civilian Employees, Inc.
Scott A. Edwards, representing Las Vegas Peace Officers Association and Southern Nevada Conference of Police and Sheriffs
Richard P. McCann, Executive Director, Nevada Association of Public Safety Officers
Michael Sean Giurlani, President, Nevada State Law Enforcement Officers' Association
Mike Cathcart, Business Operations Manager, City of Henderson
Steven Cohen, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Brian McAnallen, Government Affairs Manager, Office of Administrative Services, City of Las Vegas

Chairman Flores:

[Roll was called. Committee rules and protocol were explained.] On the agenda, we have Assembly Bill 151, which provides for the certification of law enforcement dispatchers. I would like to open the hearing on A.B. 151. May I have our Assemblywoman Carlton please come up. Welcome.

I want to remind everyone that today is Veterans Day here at the Legislature. For any veterans in the audience, thank you for your service. We want to recognize you. I do not know if any other members of our Committee are veterans—Assemblyman Kramer and Assemblyman McArthur are both veterans. We want to recognize you today and thank you for your service.

**Assembly Bill 151: Provides for the certification of law enforcement dispatchers.
(BDR 23-767)**

Assemblywoman Maggie Carlton, Assembly District No. 14:

Thank you for having the hearing on Assembly Bill 151. Before you today is what I consider a no-nonsense bill. It is about training. It is about training of people who I think are really important in a process. Those of us who have ever had to pick up a phone or instruct a child on how to dial 9-1-1, we count on that person at the other end of the line to do what needs to be done to help us when we are at a spot where we really need somebody to come and help. I feel that training for these folks is very, very important.

At one time in my oldest daughter's life, she thought she wanted to be a dispatcher. I took her on a tour of the dispatch center and she looked at me afterwards and said, "I am not so sure about this anymore." It is a very complicated, high-stress job. I think it is wonderful that folks want to get standard training. I was contacted via email and asked if I was interested in something like this. They told me this is what they would like to do. They sent me the information. I said I would be more than happy to help but I could not actually do the bill. You are going to do the bill; it is your niche, you know what you really need. But I will be happy to be the person who does the bill and brings you to the Legislature so that you can have this conversation.

I know they will be discussing an amendment (Exhibit C) with you that they have worked on with a number of folks in the building. I believe they are happy with it. I was not involved in those discussions. Mr. Chairman, with that, if there are any questions I can answer for you, otherwise, I have found a way to make sure your bill is successful. Let us just get out of the way and let the people who know what they are doing do the bill.

Julie Butler, Chief, General Services Division, Department of Public Safety:

The General Services Division of the Department of Public Safety consists of two bureaus, one of which is the Records Bureau. The other is the Communications Bureau. The Communications Bureau consists of the Department of Public Safety's three regional dispatch centers in Carson City, Las Vegas, and Elko, and a warrants unit. Today, we are pleased to bring you A.B. 151, which discusses continuing education for dispatcher training. I am pleased to present to you Denise Stewart, who is our Carson City Center Manager for our dispatch services. She is going to provide the testimony on A.B. 151.

Denise Stewart, Carson City Center Manager, Communications Bureau, General Services Division, Department of Public Safety:

As Julie stated, we have three centers around the state that comprise our group. Public safety dispatchers play a vital role in the law enforcement-public safety system. Dispatchers serve as the nerve center of the public safety system (Exhibit D). Much like air traffic controllers, it is the public safety dispatcher and any decisions that he or she makes that influence effective and safe operations. Dispatchers are usually the first point of public contact in receiving calls regarding crimes, traffic incidents, safety hazards, and miscellaneous requests for service. They are responsible for facilitating an appropriate response by field units. They

monitor field activity and provide information that is often critical to the safety of citizens and field personnel. Across Nevada, there are approximately 325 full- and part-time law enforcement communications specialist dispatchers. Yet the training of dispatchers nationwide, including Nevada, has been inadequate when compared with other occupations involving high-risk decision-making.

According to the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International, 51 percent of the states have legislation requiring some sort of mandatory training for their dispatchers. Of the five states surrounding Nevada, four have some sort of mandatory requirement for dispatcher certification through their state's equivalent of peace officers' standards and training. Therefore, for purposes of promoting and protecting citizen health, safety, and welfare, the Department of Public Safety, through Assemblywoman Carlton, requested A.B. 151. Existing law requires the Peace Officers' Standards and Training (POST) Commission to adopt regulations governing the certification, decertification, recruitment, selection, and training of peace officers. Section 3, as proposed by the Department's amendment to A.B. 151 ([Exhibit C](#)), would allow the POST Commission to adopt regulations establishing a voluntary program outlining minimum standards for the certification and training of law enforcement dispatchers. The proposed amendment to section 3 further authorizes the Executive Director of the POST Commission to certify qualified instructors for developing training for law enforcement dispatchers and to issue certificates to law enforcement dispatchers who satisfactorily complete this training.

Certification of training would have far-reaching benefits. It would promote continuing excellence, keep dispatchers abreast of the latest developments in emergency dispatch, and make continuing education a priority. Certified individuals not only maintain their competence to practice but also increase their professional pride, achievement, and self-confidence. Completing certified courses is a validation of the dispatcher's competence to peers, employers, administrators, state and local government officials, as well as the public served. Training certification and continuing education contribute to the creation of an environment of professionalism, excellence in customer care, and a culture of retention—a critical issue for all employers. Certification advances the profession by encouraging and recognizing professional achievement. It also demonstrates that emergency communication centers employ the most skilled and knowledgeable emergency dispatchers.

As proposed, the program would offer a sequence of courses with a minimum of 120 hours of training. Classes would be offered at no cost online via the State of Nevada Online Professional Development Center (NVeLEARN), Division of Enterprise Information Technology Services, Department of Administration. Classes would be available to civilians and sworn individuals employed by any law enforcement agency. As the training is voluntary, agencies can allow their dispatchers time during working hours to take the classes. Dispatchers can take the classes on their own time or not at all. The proposed certified class content is included as one of the exhibits ([Exhibit E](#)). Certificates of completion will be issued by POST to civilian and sworn employees who satisfactorily complete the core training courses.

In summary, POST-certified training classes would meet the needs of employers, practitioners, and the public by identifying and formally validating individuals with specific knowledge and skills. It protects the public, individual agencies, and responders served. It creates a professional environment of customer service excellence and assures the public served that dispatch professionals have met the standards of care as outlined, required, and prescribed by these training classes. Completion of the training classes and certification would demonstrate an individual's commitment to a profession and to life-long learning. It will provide individuals with a sense of pride and professional accomplishment.

Assemblyman Kramer:

I have been involved with Carson City for a number of years, and the Carson City sheriff and fire dispatch is not the same one you are talking about. I know that over the years there have been many times when they have had difficulty hiring people. My recollection is that Western Nevada College (WNC) had classes to teach people how to prepare to be hired as a dispatcher. I am wondering whether WNC or other similar training programs would be made superfluous if this certification program became available or whether the programs would work together. I know there is a critical need, and getting people trained for this is hard. Quite frankly, there is a fairly high turnover rate because people find out they do not like it or it does not work with their schedules. There is a constant need to fill dispatcher positions. Is this program in competition with something done by the community college, or is it just in addition to? I see it is voluntary. At what point does voluntary mean you are not promoted without it?

Denise Stewart:

The WNC program was discontinued three or four years ago. I was very involved in that for a number of years as an instructor. They did produce some dispatchers out of the program. This would not be in competition with a program like that. We are looking for certification of those who are currently employed by an agency. As you said, it is difficult to find employees due to a variety of reasons. But no, it would not be in conflict. It would be something for those who are currently employed.

Julie Butler:

As for it becoming mandatory for promotion, that would be up to each individual agency to decide whether they wanted to make the certification a criterion for promotion. I can tell you within the General Services Division of the Department of Public Safety (DPS), I intend to require it as training for all of my dispatchers. It will be in addition to the on-the-job training they get. This will be a supplement. It is not going to be optional for my staff. If other agencies want to take that same stance, it is really up to them.

Assemblyman Carrillo:

I have a question regarding the actual certification. You have said that throughout the country there is a lack of certification as a whole. Would a similar dispatcher certification from another state be of benefit to someone who comes to Nevada? Would that certification be recognized or would they have to complete the POST certification in Nevada?

Julie Butler:

We did not contemplate that in this bill. That would be something we would have to address with the POST Commission if we wanted to allow reciprocal recognition. I think anybody who comes in with an equivalent POST certification from another state is certainly a signal to us, as an employer of dispatchers, that they have met some sort of minimum criteria. That is something we would look at favorably.

Assemblyman Ellison:

I am aware of the stress on dispatchers when officers do not respond. I know the stress and stories that are out there. I know the Nevada Highway Patrol, Department of Public Safety (DPS) was trying to close down that unit in Elko. A problem we have in rural Nevada is we still have two radio systems. The problem we are running into is in some of these areas there is no radio communication. We are going to do whatever we can to keep that dispatch open. I know Senator Goicoechea is working on that on the Senate side. As far as the training goes, I think it is a great idea. Sometimes the dispatchers have to train the officers more than the other way around. I think this bill is good. I looked at the notes on it. There are four reports on a fiscal note but there is nothing there. Can you explain that? Is it going into your regular training budget?

Julie Butler:

I have not looked at the other agency fiscal notes. As I have indicated, it is going to be required as part of on-the-job training for my staff at DPS. Several of my staff participated in the development of the curriculum through the POST Commission. They would continue to work in that role and do outreach to other law enforcement agencies as we make changes to the curriculum. Since it will be on-the-job training, we indicated no fiscal impact as far as DPS is concerned.

Assemblywoman Woodbury:

I have a question related to the voluntary basis of the program. Currently, is there certain training and certification required to become a dispatcher? To clarify, this bill would make it voluntary for dispatchers. Is that only if the amendment is included? Could an agency require this certification or continuing certification before a dispatcher could be promoted?

Julie Butler:

To my knowledge, there is no specific certification required to be a dispatcher today. That is part of the reason we are bringing this bill. Every agency that employs dispatchers has some sort of equivalent on-the-job training for their dispatchers. At DPS, we put our dispatchers through what we call an academy, which is an eight-month program to take them from basically learning how to answer the telephone and figuring out the pertinent questions to ask to gradually working them into how to use the radio. The next stage of training is using the radio and the phone at the same time. We supervise them for a period of time until they are proficient enough to handle both on their own.

As far as using the certification as part of a promotional criterion, speaking only for DPS, since I am going to require it for all of my staff, I do not think looking at the certification would be something I would consider for promotions. I am just going to expect they get the certification. I cannot speak to what other agencies may or may not require for their promotional opportunities.

Assemblywoman Woodbury:

It is voluntary, but not if an agency requires it?

Julie Butler:

That is correct.

Assemblywoman Woodbury:

Is that true only if the amendment is included, that it would be voluntary?

Julie Butler:

It was always voluntary. There was a feeling that the way the bill was originally drafted somehow made it mandatory. The only mandatory provision was for the POST Commission to adopt regulations. Because phones were blowing up as far as the Nevada Sheriffs' and Chiefs' Association and the POST Commission were concerned, and because people were panicking over this somehow being a mandate, we wanted to clarify with the amendment. We wanted to submit the amendment to clarify this is a voluntary program.

Assemblywoman Joiner:

I feel my question has been asked a couple of different ways and I am still not clear. I am looking at the amendment, and I think that the amendment would leave the definition of "law enforcement dispatcher" in section 1. Why would we not make the certification required like it is in the original bill? I think you spoke to this when you mentioned the amendment. From where I am sitting, I do not really like that the POST Commission may adopt regulations. That means they do not have to. They may adopt a training program. They do not have to. People may take the certification classes. They do not have to. If we want the ultimate customer service for our public, why would we not just require it?

Julie Butler:

That is a very good question. We were getting a lot of pushback from other stakeholders about making the certification a requirement. This was a way to at least try to get a foot in the door to make sure that we had some baseline. I have every confidence that the POST Commission will adopt the regulations. The class has already been developed ([Exhibit D](#)). It has already been certified, so it is just a matter of going through the regulation adoption process. As a first step, we felt it was important that the program be voluntary. Perhaps in the future we can address making the certification mandatory—if it is the will of this body to amend the bill to make it mandatory.

Assemblywoman Monroe-Moreno:

In looking over the original bill, are there any other states that currently have a certification program like the one you are suggesting?

Denise Stewart:

Four of the five states surrounding Nevada have certification for their dispatchers. The state we look at most is California. They have a mandatory program through their POST. Some of the curriculum that we have looked at is modeled after California's curriculum. Western states that have mandatory certification are Oregon, California, Montana, Wyoming, Arizona, and New Mexico. They all have some sort of curriculum. Many of their curriculums look similar to what we are proposing. Certification is required to even apply for a dispatch position in the states we have noted.

Assemblywoman Monroe-Moreno:

I spent 27.5 years in correctional law enforcement. Of that period, I spent 4.5 years doing backgrounds and investigations. The dispatcher position was a position we were constantly trying to fill. I appreciate this bill and I think it is extremely necessary. I personally do not like the voluntary part. I think if we are going to do it, we just need to mandate it. That is a personal observation. To move this from voluntary to mandatory, I think would be great. If we have to start with the voluntary now, then I definitely would encourage using it as a promotional incentive to keep people on.

Assemblywoman Neal:

We listened to the need for the bill. The fact is, there is no certification but then we went to the permissive piece. I am not clear on the reasons why you accepted the amendment. I am trying to figure out if there is a cost-prohibitive issue. Is there a cost associated with mandating it? What is the cost difference between mandating it and making it voluntary?

Julie Butler:

From our perspective, there is no cost since the training is online via NVeLEARN. I think there was a feeling in the law enforcement community that somehow this would make them subject to police and fire retirement, or it would take additional time to complete the certification, or there would be some associated cost. Despite our assurances to the contrary, there was still that unease in the community. I did not field any of those calls personally. I know Mike Sherlock from the POST Commission received calls. Bob Roshak from the Nevada Sheriffs' and Chiefs' Association (NvSCA) also took calls. I am telling you what I heard secondhand. Again, we felt it was important to bring this forward, to recognize there is a need. We offered the amendment to clarify that need. There would be no cost because the dispatcher certificate training program would be online.

Assemblywoman Neal:

Let us dig into that. You mentioned retirement. Explain that a little bit further. Even though you heard it secondhand, what is the myth or misconception? What do dispatchers currently have in regards to retirement?

Julie Butler:

I cannot speak to what retirement local law enforcement agencies offer to their dispatchers because it may be something different. As far as the state, our dispatchers have regular employee retirement. They can receive unreduced retirement after 30 years of service. Police and fire retirement offers unreduced retirement after 25 years of service.

Assemblywoman Neal:

This bill would make changes to *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) Chapter 289. Because they were being placed under this chapter, was there then the belief that somehow there would be an enhanced retirement?

Julie Butler:

Again, just speculating on what I heard secondhand, yes there was that concern. There was also concern that the POST Commission was getting into mandating something beyond what peace officers do. I think the concern was about general-scope creep over what the POST Commission covered.

Assemblywoman Neal:

I am going to ask you this without continuing to put you out there for secondhand information. Who was it who made the call and said it to whomever? Who said it?

Julie Butler:

Who said what?

Assemblywoman Neal:

You said you did not receive the call but there was another person who did. Who received that call, and who was the person on the other end telling them all these issues?

Julie Butler:

I heard my information secondhand through Mike Sherlock from the POST Commission and Bob Roshak with NvSCA. There were a variety of calls. No specific person was mentioned.

Assemblywoman Neal:

Are any of those people in the room today?

Julie Butler:

I think so.

Assemblywoman Neal:

So we can ask them directly. I do not know what they look like. Could you point them out?

Julie Butler:

Mike, is that you down south? I do not know who is down in Las Vegas. Is Mike here? In the back? I do not know what they look like. I have met Mike Sherlock once, so I cannot point him out.

Assemblyman Marchant:

I am trying to understand why we need to do this in the first place. Were there incidents that caused you to want this bill?

Julie Butler:

Prior to July 1, 2013, state dispatch was managed by the Highway Patrol. Since that date, dispatch has come under the General Services Division. One of the first things I heard from the staff was that there needed to be recognition of this as a real profession. It is not just people answering the phone. They need training. We got to looking at what other states require and the commonalities of the job among different professions, and we realized that you really could quantify what the job is. Even though you might be working for a local police department or sheriff's office or the Highway Patrol, there is a certain core niche of competencies that relate to the job.

We first want to recognize that this is a profession. I want my staff to have opportunities within the profession. We have the same problems with turnover that every agency has in this profession. My staff was asking for certified training and we felt the same training might be needed by other agencies. That is our interest in bringing the bill forward.

Second, we do a lot of cross-jurisdictional work, particularly in northern Nevada. Locally, we work with public safety personnel in Washoe, Lyon, Storey, Churchill, and Douglas Counties. Making sure we have a minimum baseline of training is important so we are all speaking the same language.

Assemblyman Marchant:

Do you think this would make it harder to hire people, or make it more difficult for people to apply for work?

Julie Butler:

No, I do not think so.

Assemblyman Ellison:

In looking through the bill, I do not see anything that shows an increase in wages or retirement. The only thing I see that is increased is the training. Is that correct?

Julie Butler:

Yes. For those who choose to avail themselves of the training, it is a minimum of 120 hours. If the employer allows it, the training can be taken on agency time. It can also be taken on the individual's own time because it is online.

Assemblyman Ellison:

I have spent a lot of time in dispatch centers, and some of the calls that come through will make your hair stand up. The situations that dispatchers deal with are very diverse. They may get a woman on the phone whose child is dying or choking, and the dispatcher is trying to get a response team out plus talk to her and tell her what to do. Or there may be a shooting

situation, or officers are not responding. They are trying to dispatch everybody around ambulances and fire trucks, plus they are trying to talk people through the situation. What these people need to know is massive—everything from first aid to dealing with people considering suicide. It is amazing what these people go through and the stress levels they work under. After reading this bill, I was shocked there was not already some kind of mandatory training. I thought there was, prior to hire. I think training is a good thing.

Assemblywoman Bilbray-Axelrod:

If I am hired as a dispatcher, how long does it take until I am actually on the phone receiving 911 calls? What is the current training like?

Denise Stewart:

Currently, the DPS centers are not 9-1-1 centers, but I have worked in a 9-1-1 call center. Each agency sets up its training a little bit differently. In our program, we go through all the administrative functions first. We spend a large amount of time on geography, because we do cover a large geographical area in each of our centers. This portion of the training lasts for approximately four weeks. After that we are ready to start teaching them how to answer the phones. We spend six to eight weeks teaching them how to answer a variety of calls. Again, we are not a 911 call center, but as I recall, my 911 call center training was about the same or possibly a bit longer.

There is so much that goes into teaching a person how to deal with different types of calls. You might have a call where it is just a person looking for information. The next call you might get is a missing child call. Next, you may be trying to deal with a person who just got home and found her husband has shot himself. We do our best to try to teach them how to handle all of these different types of calls. Our call training is at least two months if not longer. Each agency might have a different time frame for training its dispatchers. I know there are agencies where dispatchers may be just call takers for almost a year before they ever get to train to be a radio operator.

Assemblyman Ellison:

When you are doing training, it helps with your advancement and career. Is there a way that this can be a voluntary thing instead of a mandate? I think that would be one of the biggest concerns in some of these smaller agencies. Can we encourage the training but not make it a total mandate? Can you please respond to that?

Julie Butler:

It is voluntary. There is no mandate.

Assemblywoman Neal:

Do any of you happen to know how much is actually in the State General Fund training budget?

Julie Butler:

That would be a question for the POST Commission.

Chairman Flores:

If I could please have both of you sit back for a second. Our Vice Chairwoman asked some questions that need clarification. If I could please have those people who can respond to her questions come forward.

Mike Sherlock, Executive Director, Peace Officers' Standards and Training Commission:

With me is Boe Turner. He is the Chief of Training for the POST Commission. Mr. Turner actually helped create the training program for dispatchers.

Assemblywoman Neal:

My first question is, do you believe that the way the original bill is written will cause an enhanced retirement to occur? If so, why and how?

Mike Sherlock:

I am not an expert on the Public Employees' Retirement System. I can tell you that there was some concern regarding retirement that we were made aware of should the bill be mandated. There are a lot of reasons for that, not just fiscal. We live in a diverse state. Sometimes, certain portions of the state are hesitant to have the state mandate anything.

That being said, NRS 289.450 only directs the POST Commission to do certain things. As hard as I tried to explain that to those who called me, they could not understand it. Even the original language of this bill did not mandate any agency or group of dispatchers. Not all of the sheriffs and chiefs had concerns. For those who did, it was the original language adding dispatch to the list of categories of peace officers within the state. The belief was because it added a category into the statute, it made the certification mandatory. It does not. I believe the authors of the bill decided to make that more clear through the amendment. It is absolutely a voluntary program. There is no fiscal impact. We do not charge for training. The training has already been developed.

Last November, in an advisory vote, the POST Commission voted to support dispatchers. From our perspective, there is a direct nexus between law enforcement on the street and the dispatchers. In our opinion, having a standard for dispatchers is not a bad thing. Please understand, it would be a statewide standard. Someone with this training could move from one employer to another, and that employer could be comfortable knowing that person received a certain amount of standardized training—training that is available online.

Assemblywoman Neal:

This is really good information. If the training were statewide, there would be uniformity. The employer will know what they were getting when they hire a dispatcher.

Mike Sherlock:

Yes, exactly right. The other thing I would like to mention is when we look at these types of things, we do not want to do what other states do just because they do it. We are the only state in the West that does not have dispatchers under POST purview. We are also the only western state that does not have some sort of minimum standards for dispatchers.

I know they said four out of five states surrounding Nevada have established standards, but the fact of the matter is, all western states have some sort of standards for dispatchers except for Nevada. They may be mandatory standards like in California or voluntary standards like in Oregon and Idaho and some of the other states. We are the only state that does not have some sort of standards for our dispatchers.

Assemblywoman Monroe-Moreno:

After hearing that comment, shame on us. The dispatcher who answers the phone in an emergency is the first line of contact for the citizen who is calling for help and is the first lifeline for the patrolman who is responding. So shame on us as a state for not having a statewide certification. I do not see anywhere in the bill or in NRS where this would put the dispatchers into police and fire retirement. That is not going to happen.

I think the least we can do for the citizens we represent is make sure when people answer the phone they are qualified to do the job and their training is standardized, so no matter if the call comes to a center in Carson City, Las Vegas, or Henderson, the person who is answering that phone call has passed a minimum standardized test for this state. Shame on us for not having that already in place.

Assemblyman Kramer:

Assemblywoman Monroe-Moreno's comments left me a little bit confused. I would like to ask one more question to clarify. I did not understand this training to be a requirement to get a job. I understand once a person has gone through on-the-job training and has been there long enough to be deemed able enough to field the calls that come in on a routine basis, then they would be trusted with doing that job.

My understanding of this certification is this would be a program you do after you have been in the job awhile to more or less prove that you are comfortable with all the points of the training. They have passed the test and gotten the certification. It is now on their resumé. It would not be that much different than having a purchasing agent go through a purchasing certification process after he has been on the job awhile so that other people know what his skills are, that he has passed all these different points. This is not really part of the training as much as it is to show others that you have actually learned the job and you are qualified in certain areas. Is that a fair statement?

Mike Sherlock:

I would agree with you. We are a certifying entity. We are simply giving acknowledgement that whatever the standard is, they have met the standard. So I would agree with you, yes.

Assemblywoman Monroe-Moreno:

I was not saying that you could not be hired if you were not certified. We hire police, we hire corrections, we hire probation officers who are not immediately qualified, but we train them to be qualified once we hire them. That is what I am saying. If someone is hired as a dispatcher, then we should expect that person be trained and have standardized training across the state for that job classification. That is what I was saying.

Assemblywoman Neal:

Is there a cost associated with the certification of law enforcement dispatchers? The way the statute reads, there is a range of positions specified as peace officers within NRS 289.450. To me, this falls in line with what is already in statute. We could just add an additional category for certification. Can you speak to that?

Mike Sherlock:

We did enter a fiscal note and the cost was \$100. That is the cost of the piece of paper for the certificate. The training has already been developed primarily by a consortium of dispatchers from across the state. We have already certified the training. The next step, should this bill pass, would be to issue certificates to those who meet the standards. The cost for us is, essentially, the paper.

Assemblywoman Neal:

In your opinion, when you look at the original bill as written, do you believe there is a need for the amendment that has the "may," which is the permissive piece, versus the original language?

Mike Sherlock:

I would say that the amendment makes some of those with an interest more comfortable. It is voluntary either way. It may help some of the rural sheriffs and chiefs, or sheriffs and chiefs across the state, have a certain level of comfort. Either way it is voluntary. I do not know if we want to get into an argument over whether the original language made it clear the certification was voluntary.

Assemblywoman Neal:

I guess that is probably what created all the questions from the Committee. If the certification is voluntary, it is voluntary. This bill does not change that at all. If we had walked in this building yesterday, it would still be voluntary. We are going round and round about what already is, and it is kind of insane at this point.

Mike Sherlock:

Nevada Revised Statutes 289.450 is telling the POST Commission what to do; it is not telling law enforcement agencies what to do. Regardless of the language, if NRS 289.450 puts dispatchers within the jurisdiction of the POST Commission and says the POST Commission may establish regulations related to the certification by the POST Commission, it is not mandatory. I do see the concern, and that is why I think the amendment was put in.

Chairman Flores:

Thank you both. I do not know if you had a chance to identify yourself, sir?

Boe Turner, Bureau Chief, Professional Development Bureau, Peace Officers' Standards and Training Commission:

I am Boe Turner, for the record. I am with the Commission on Peace Officers' Standards and Training.

Chairman Flores:

I appreciate your coming up at the last minute. I know that was not anticipated. Thank you for your input.

At this time I would like those who wish to speak in support of A.B. 151 to please make your way to the front. I notice there is somebody in Las Vegas. Are you there to testify in support?

Robert Roshak, Executive Director, Nevada Sheriffs' and Chiefs' Association:

I understand you were looking for me earlier. I apologize for being late. I was tied up in the Assembly Committee on Judiciary.

The sheriffs and chiefs had expressed some concern with the original draft of the bill. I believe that concern was over confusion as to what exactly the requirements were in the original wording. They are in support of the amended language.

A.J. Delap, Government Liaison, Office of Intergovernmental Services, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department:

I would just like to take this opportunity to thank Julie Butler and her team at the POST Commission for creating this training. I would also like to take this opportunity to give a brief overview of what we provide to our dispatchers with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD). It is quite extensive. I am always surprised at what our department does to train our personnel.

To start with, to be a dispatcher for LVMPD you have to get hired, which is difficult in this day and age with our high standards. Once you are hired, you are going to go into a ten-week academy. From there, you are going to do 16 weeks at the consoles working with a communications training officer. From there, you are going to spend 18 months on probation. During that time, within a year you are going to attend another academy that goes for two weeks and has to do with dispatching officers—actually, direct line communications. Then from there, it is going to be another 28 to 30 weeks of console training with an officer in attendance, where you are going to be working with another experienced dispatcher and actually dispatching officers on calls. I have to say, as a working police officer, I am always impressed with our dispatchers and their level of knowledge and their ability to manage multiple tasks. It is beyond comprehension, in my humble opinion.

That being said, I feel that our agency certainly does an excellent job of making sure our dispatchers are properly trained. Just to give you a number of what our staffing level is, we have well over 200 call takers and dispatchers, so the personnel number is quite extensive. We certainly appreciate the POST Commission taking the time and using their resources to create the training that they are offering. However, and I am hesitant to go in this direction, the mandate would be difficult for us. The problem is, we answer around 3 million calls a year. That boils down to six calls a minute at a minimum. The workload is intense. To some degree, it is fast and furious.

We feel that our training is certainly at the highest level standard, and if there was a mandate to come down on us to also meet a POST standard, although very adequate and certainly exceptional in its own right, it would be basically pulling all our dispatchers and call takers away from their duties to meet that mandate. I am open to any further conversations regarding this issue. We appreciate all the work that is being done by this Committee.

Ronald P. Dreher, Government Affairs Director, Peace Officers Research Association of Nevada:

We are in support of A.B. 151 with the amendment. I have to echo the comments that A.J. Delap just put on the record. I was a police officer for the City of Reno for a number of years, and for a number of years my wife was a dispatcher in Reno. She handled all kinds of calls. I have worked with dispatchers my whole career. When we were looking at what Commissioner Sherlock put on the record, one of the things we looked at was the cost. He indicated there was basically no cost.

The Department of Public Safety has indicated it does on-the-job training and the POST training will be required for their employees. There is lateral training for peace officers throughout the state. It is great to have the kind of training where an employee can go from Reno to Las Vegas to Elko and have the same type of standardized training. I think that is the intent of the bill. I also share the concerns that you heard from the sheriffs and chiefs and others that mandating the training could result in problems in some parts of the state. When you codify it by making it voluntary, then you cross that bridge and you take out many of the concerns including cost.

As far as opening the door for police and fire retirement, or for making them peace officers, I do not see that at all. It is good to have standardized training. I know Washoe County has many kinds of training for its dispatchers. Reno does also. It is a very difficult field and career to keep people in. With that in mind, we support A.B. 151 with the amendment because it takes out the cost factor. In that regard, I am here on behalf of our dispatchers in Washoe County and the members of the Peace Officers Research Association of Nevada to support A.B. 151.

Marlene Lockard, representing Las Vegas Police Protective Association Civilian Employees, Inc.:

We feel very strongly that proper training be made available to our dispatchers. We support A.B. 151 with the amendment.

Scott A. Edwards, representing Las Vegas Peace Officers Association and Southern Nevada Conference of Police and Sheriffs:

I am president of the Las Vegas Peace Officers Association and president of the Southern Nevada Conference of Police and Sheriffs, representing most of the police unions in southern Nevada. We also support this position and echo the concerns of our colleagues.

Richard P. McCann, Executive Director, Nevada Association of Public Safety Officers:

We are also a member of the statewide law enforcement coalition. We certainly support any form of training. You have heard a number of accolades about how hard these people work in the dispatch centers. We are here to say the same thing. They are the lifeblood of people who are out on the streets. I do have this comment, however: You cannot be a cop unless you are POST-certified. Now we have dispatchers who are going to receive certification through a POST training program.

I am a little concerned, and I do not mean this in a derogatory manner, but they are adding this to their resumé. Is it going to be mandatory? Is it not going to be mandatory? When I read the POST Communications Operator Certificate Training Program proposal ([Exhibit D](#)), which you have, it says that certified individuals not only maintain their competence to practice but also increase their professional pride, achievement, and self-confidence. It also says that certification is a validation of a holder's competence to peers, employers, administrators, state and local government officials, and the public served. And it further says the purpose of this program is preparing students—of the program, I guess—for employment, continued employment, and professional development as a dispatcher. I guess my common-sense question is, do they not have that now? I will echo, I believe it was Assemblywoman Monroe-Moreno, when she said shame on us if we are not doing that now. What do they have now? These people are incredible. It is almost like, if you do not complete the POST training, you do not have all of these things. Yeah, they do.

You may as well put that on the record that I am concerned about a bill coming forward that clearly provides training, a lot of information, a certification process, and stability. This we all applaud. But when I read this, it is almost like law enforcement dispatchers do not have competence unless they go to POST. Ladies and gentlemen, these people are incredible at what they do. They already have this stuff. This would add to what they already have. I do not think it is the bill designers' desire to suggest they do not have any of that now, that they do not have competence, stability, or the ability to do their jobs at peak performance levels. They do that now. I am kind of curious as to why they need POST certification to tell them that. As far as the bill itself and trying to provide additional training, you are not going to get any argument from us. Training is the lifeblood of what they do. If you want to make them better, great. They keep law enforcement officers out on the street safe and without dispatchers, they cannot do their jobs.

Chairman Flores:

So just to be clear, you are in support of this bill?

Rick McCann:

Yes. I may have gone toward neutral, but I am supporting the bill. I hope it is not an indication that they do not have qualified dispatchers now. I do not think it is the desire of the framers of this bill to say we do not have qualified dispatchers. When I read the certificate program, I am reading what they developed. If anybody on this Committee read it the way I did, they may have questioned whether we have qualified dispatchers now. I just want you to know they do have that now. They are great people. They are doing the job. I am supporting the bill. We are absolutely supporting the bill, but I just want to point out when I read the exhibits, they give the impression that without POST certification we do not have qualified dispatchers. They do have that now.

Assemblywoman Neal:

I do not think a majority of the members read it that way. We understood that the bill was asking for uniformity across the state and was asking for standards to be put in place under POST so there was no question as to who got what training. We all understood that across the state it would be uniform. That was why we could not figure out what was so wrong with the original language if the certification was always voluntary.

Rick McCann:

A comment to that comment: I agree. It is uniformity. It is a standardization process. We agree with it. That is why we are here supporting the bill. I want to be clear that law enforcement dispatchers do such an incredible job. When I see something that says the purpose of this program is to prepare them to be good, I want to put on the record that they are already.

Chairman Flores:

I appreciate that, and I appreciate your recognizing the hard work and talent of our dispatchers and all they do.

Michael Sean Giurlani, President, Nevada State Law Enforcement Officers' Association:

I am a 25-year retired veteran of the Nevada Highway Patrol. We are in support of A.B. 151. Just to touch on a little history, I started out in law enforcement long before becoming a trooper. I was a dispatcher for the Carson City Sheriff's Office when I was 18. Denise Stewart was my training officer. It is very important that we keep the dispatchers that we hire. The training is so important. They are the lifeline for the officers on the street. I know Senator Goicoechea has spoken about this in many different hearings. I have listened to this over the last couple of weeks. I know the geography and the concerns they have about closing the Elko dispatch center. We need to hire people with the understanding we are going to train them to the best of our ability to keep them in their jobs. It is imperative that we have a standardized system of training throughout the state. That being said, it is very important that we train the people we hire so we can retain them in their jobs.

Mike Cathcart, Business Operations Manager, City of Henderson:

We are in support of the bill with the amendment. We do have a very rigorous training program for our dispatchers. On-the-job training may last for up to a year. Our dispatchers are already going through a very rigorous training process. We will look at possibly adding this certification process to our training program in the future.

Chairman Flores:

Is there anybody else who wishes to speak in support of this measure? [There was no one.] Does anybody wish to speak in the neutral position?

Steven Cohen, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I was originally here for the Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation budget hearing. I am glad I am representing the autism community statewide. My chief concern, to echo some of the earlier concerns, is regarding the mandate and the infrastructure. I have been texting vigorously and taking notes as well. The staff contact for the Nevada Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders, Aging and Disability Services Division, Department of Health and Human Services, is concurrently the executive director of a nonprofit that has the resources to impact dispatch services in urban northern Nevada.

The problem in southern Nevada and rural areas in the state is the infrastructure is so old the autism community cannot get adequately represented and cannot ensure that dispatchers are adequately trained to assist those with autism.

Chairman Flores:

Sir, I want to clarify that your testimony is pertaining to A.B. 151. Is that correct?

Steven Cohen:

Yes. The problem I see with leaving it voluntary is that when you have folks, not necessarily the dispatchers, but when you have infrastructure and officers that do not live with autism, how can they adequately assist the families who make the call to dispatch? That would be my chief concern. My question to LVMPD would be how could the infrastructure be fixed in southern Nevada to create an equal position for those with autism such as it now exists in northern Nevada?

Brian McAnallen, Government Affairs Manager, Office of Administrative Services, City of Las Vegas:

We did put in a fiscal note that may be causing some confusion. A lot of the comments that other folks have made are relevant to our concerns. Reading the original bill, law enforcement dispatchers in this amendment would be a broad category, and we believe that would include our fire and rescue dispatchers. It was unclear as to what that training would be. If it is online and that is what would be out there, we could certainly comply with that. I think the cost in our fiscal note was related to having to go back and add additional training for our current dispatchers. We would certainly take them out of line to do that training on the clock.

Our dispatchers are not POST-certified. We do put them through a rigorous training process that takes about six months. I think our fiscal note was responding to the broad language and uncertainty in the bill. We are fine with the amendment, and we continue to hold high standards for our dispatchers and think that standards are important.

Chairman Flores:

Is there anybody else who wishes to speak in the neutral position? [There was no one.] Is there anybody who wishes to speak in opposition? [There was no one.] May I have our Assemblywoman and any other individuals who presented who would like to come back up and give closing remarks.

Assemblywoman Carlton:

Thank you for having the hearing on this bill. Thank you for asking really, really great questions. I do appreciate the hard work of the Committee. I know this is a first step towards training. I do not believe anyone ever intended in any way to overstep. I think there is a little confusion on the mandatory versus voluntary. I am sure you and your Committee have all the resources you need to make those decisions as far as this bill goes. I know the person proposing the bill worked very hard to gain consensus from a number of different parties. Sometimes you can negotiate to a point where you just need to stop negotiating.

I think this training is very important, and I know we will figure out how to move this forward. If the proponents of the bill are comfortable with the amendments, I am happy to stand with them because I told them I would be a partner with them in this. However the Committee would like to proceed with this bill, I am absolutely fine with. I will tell you that I was a little surprised by some of the comments. I had not heard some of those before. Luckily, that is what the hearing process is all about—to get everything on the table. As far as a fiscal note from any local jurisdiction, that does not have state impact. It has local impact only; therefore, it would not come to the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means afterwards. The local entities are responsible for funding in their jurisdictions, so it is not an issue that would be before money committees at the Legislature. I would be happy to answer any other questions that the Committee may have and hope for your positive review of this worthy piece of legislation.

Chairman Flores:

At this time I would like to close the hearing on A.B. 151. Thank you to all who brought testimony to the table. We appreciate that.

Before we get to public comment, we do have a bill draft request (BDR) introduction that we need to address. I just want to remind the Committee, a vote in favor of introducing the BDR does not imply that you have a commitment or you are going to be supporting the measure. This just means that you are allowing the BDR to be introduced, and to become a bill so it can go through the regular legislative process. At this time, I would like to entertain a motion to introduce BDR 20-731.

BDR 20-731 – Revises provisions governing the use of money collected from surcharges for the rental of a room in certain hotels. (Later introduced as [Assembly Bill 306](#).)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MONROE-MORENO MOVED TO INTRODUCE
BILL DRAFT REQUEST 20-731.

ASSEMBLYMAN McCURDY SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED. (ASSEMBLYMAN CARRILLO WAS ABSENT
FOR THE VOTE.)

Is there anybody here or in Las Vegas who wishes to speak during public comment?
[There was no one.] This meeting is adjourned [at 9:46 a.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Patricia Keyes
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblyman Edgar Flores, Chairman

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

[Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster.

[Exhibit C](#) is a proposed amendment to [Assembly Bill 151](#) presented by Julie Butler, Chief, General Services Division, Department of Public Safety.

[Exhibit D](#) is a document titled "POST Communications Operator Certificate Training Program Proposal," dated November 2015, authored by Carol Handegard, Communication Bureau Chief, General Services Division, Department of Public Safety, referenced by Denise Stewart, Carson City Center Manager, Communications Bureau, General Services Division, Department of Public Safety

[Exhibit E](#) is a document outlining proposed curriculum developed to prepare students for employment, continued employment and professional development as a dispatcher, submitted by Denise Stewart, Carson City Center Manager, Communications Bureau, General Services Division, Department of Public Safety.