



Councilmember Christina Henderson

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A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To declare the existence of an emergency with respect to the need to amend, on an emergency basis, the Retired Police Officer Redeployment Amendment Act of 1992 to allow retired Metropolitan Police Department officers and retired firefighters from the Fire and Emergency Services Department to be eligible for rehire at the discretion of the Director of the Office of Unified Communication as a temporary full-time or temporary part-time 911 call taker or 911 dispatcher without jeopardy to the retirement benefits of the employee.

RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Retired Firefighter and Police Officer Redeployment Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2023”.

Sec. 2. (a) Under current law, retired District government employees who collect pension benefits and are rehired by another District agency are subject to an annuity offset. This offset deters retired government employees from pursuing employment at another District agency. However, the law allows for some exceptions to this rule. There are currently pension offset exemptions for retired Metropolitan Police Department officers who are rehired as fully sworn temporary full-time or temporary part-time police officers, rehired as temporary full-time or temporary part-time employees at the Department of Forensic Sciences, or hired by the Superintendent of the District of Columbia Public Schools as security personnel. These

35 exemptions allow former District government employees to apply their specific skills in new
36 roles for which they are uniquely suited.

37 (b) This emergency legislation would grant to firefighters retired from the Fire and
38 Emergency Medical Services Department (FEMS) and police officers retired from the
39 Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) eligibility for rehire at the discretion of the Director of
40 the Office of Unified Communications (OUC) as temporary full-time or temporary part-time 911
41 call takers or 911 dispatchers without decreasing their retirement benefits. This exemption would
42 give OUC access to a new pool of candidates who, while not explicitly excluded from being
43 rehired as 911 call takers and dispatchers, may be uninterested in starting a new job without any
44 additional compensation.

45 (c) Retired firefighters and police officers would be valuable additions to OUC's 911
46 operations, as they are familiar with dispatch operations from the FEMS and MPD perspectives.
47 They would bring to the agency's 911 call taking and dispatch departments the expertise and
48 knowledge that they acquired over decades on the front lines of emergency response, including
49 using their knowledge of the city's geography to direct first responders along the fastest route to
50 the location of the emergency incident and using their medical expertise to assist callers in
51 responding to health emergencies prior to a FEMS unit's arrival.

52 (d) OUC must maintain a minimum number of 911 call takers and dispatchers to timely
53 and safely carry out core 911 response operations. However, OUC has struggled in recent years
54 to maintain minimum staffing levels. Recently, in October 2023, 30 out of 67 911 call taker and
55 dispatcher shifts did not meet staffing targets. This was also the case for 26 out of 64 shifts in
56 September 2023, and for 26 out of 66 shifts in August 2023. Call wait times also continue to
57 exceed targets. In November 2023, fewer than half of 911 calls were answered in 15 seconds or

58 less. Since OUC’s 911 Performance Dashboard was launched, several residents submitted
59 feedback regarding 911 call wait times, which receive the response, “OUC is working to hire
60 more 911 call takers to minimize the call wait times.” OUC has had chronically high vacancy
61 rates over the past few years and instituted obligatory overtime policies to maintain minimum
62 staffing levels. These staffing gaps complicate OUC’s efforts to deliver timely and high-quality
63 frontline emergency response services to District residents.

64 (f) This legislation can help OUC reduce the number of understaffed 911 call taker and
65 dispatcher shifts, reduce call time waits, more frequently limit shifts for 911 call takers and
66 dispatchers to a maximum of 8 hours, and reduce OUC’s use of mandatory overtime to fill
67 staffing gaps for critical roles. It should increase interagency collaboration and understanding, as
68 retired firefighters, police officers, and OUC call takers and dispatchers work together to address
69 urgent medical and safety needs.

70 Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia determines that the circumstances
71 enumerated in section 2 constitute emergency circumstances making it necessary that the Retired
72 Firefighter and Police Officer Redeployment Emergency Amendment Act of 2023 be adopted
73 after a single reading.

74 Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.