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March 14,2022

The Honorable Val Demings
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lizzie Fletcher
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Rep. Demings and Rep. Fletcher,

On behalf of the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT), I write to express our strong support for H.R. 6768, to reauthorize the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet).

Formed in 1975 and over 76,000 members strong, NAEMT is the only national association representing the professional interests of all EMS practitioners, including paramedics, emergency medical technicians, emergency medical responders, and other professionals providing prehospital and out-of-hospital emergent, urgent or preventive medical care. NAEMT members work in all sectors of EMS, including government service agencies, fire departments, hospital-based ambulance services, private companies, industrial and special operations settings, and in the military.

Effective communications play a critical role in coordinating and executing the public safety response to an emergency. FirstNet facilitates these communications by providing a national broadband communications network that promotes interoperability between police, fire, EMS, and other first responders. NAEMT strongly advocated for the original legislation that established FirstNet and has continued to support efforts to strengthen the national network.

The legislation that initially created FirstNet included a 15-year sunset provision. A recent GAO report recommended that Congress reauthorize FirstNet and warned that a failure to do so would place network operations and improvements at risk and could result in public safety users losing access. This cannot be allowed to happen, especially as communities across the country contend with a variety of public safety threats, including violent crime, extreme weather, and other emergencies. H.R. 6768 will eliminate the sunset provision, thereby ensuring FirstNet can continue its work to enhance the communications technology and infrastructure first responders rely on to keep us safe.

Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me if NAEMT can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Evans". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "E".

Bruce Evans, MPA, CFO, NRP, SPO
President, NAEMT