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February 8, 2021

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-307, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Vice Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC

Dear Chairman Leahy, Ranking Member Shelby, Chairwoman DeLauro, and Ranking Member Granger:

On behalf of the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT), representing our nation's frontline EMS practitioners, thank you for your ongoing support of the EMS workforce. EMS provides critical services to their patients and communities nationwide, especially in the most rural parts of our country.

As you consider the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations for Fiscal Year FY 2022, we write to ask the Committee to provide **\$20 million in funding for the SIREN Grant Program.**

While our public and nonprofit EMS agencies proudly serve their communities, their resources are often spread thin. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, rural EMS faced challenges in delivering quality emergency medical care, due in part to recent declines in primary care and hospital service availability, greater distances between healthcare facilities, and low reimbursement rates. In recognition of these challenges, Congress passed the SIREN Act in the 2018 Farm Bill. This grant program (otherwise known as the Rural EMS Equipment and Training Assistance Program, or REMSTEA) supports public and nonprofit agencies in their efforts to train and recruit staff, provide opportunities for required continuing education, and purchase life-saving equipment.

COVID-19 exacerbated the challenges faced by rural agencies which this grant program seeks to address, especially since rural EMS agencies may be the only healthcare providers in their area. Under normal circumstances, rural agencies rely heavily upon community fundraising efforts. However, stay-at-home orders have ground these fundraising efforts to a halt. Rural EMS agencies need funds to buy PPE for their personnel, medical supplies for COVID-19 patients, and recruit and train more volunteers. Many EMS volunteers are older in age and/or have preexisting conditions, which puts them at a higher risk of contracting the virus.

While the FY2020 and FY2021 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) Appropriations bills provided \$5 million and \$5.5 million respectively for the grant program, more support is needed. To that end, **we believe funding SIREN/REMSTEA grants at \$20 million in the FY2022 LHHS Appropriations bill** will provide much needed help to strained agencies providing life-saving care to members of their communities.

We stand by to provide additional context or information where it may be helpful.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Evans", written in a cursive style.

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