



## Board of Chosen Freeholders

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Hunterdon Communications Division Head Addresses Congress On Diversion of 9-1-1 Fees

Hunterdon County Freeholder John E. Lanza, Board liaison for the Public Safety Department, reported at the October 16 Freeholder meeting that Communications Division Head Jim Curry recently testified during a Congressional hearing on ‘solutions to strengthen U.S. Public Safety communications.’

Lanza reported, “Mr. Curry testified before the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology regarding the cost of maintaining the County’s 9-1-1 Center, the lack of funding that results from the diversion by the state of telephone fees that are supposedly dedicated to 9-1-1 costs, and our support for Congressman Lance’s legislation, H.R. 6424, which is aimed at stopping the diversion.”

Curry told the Congressional Committee, “The Communications Center is the sole provider of emergency communications for each municipal police department, fire department, and EMS agency in the County. All totaled, we dispatch for about 60 organizations. Daily, we average a little over one hundred 9-1-1 calls or about 38,000 a year. This is carried out by 25 dedicated full-time Public Safety Telecommunicators, commonly referred to as dispatchers.

These men and women are never seen, always heard, and seldom recognized. They work nights, weekends, and holidays and like our first responders – they can’t stay home because the weather is bad. Day in and day out they speak to folks who are having the worst day of their lives. For some of those callers, the dispatcher is the last human voice they will hear. If you ask the dispatchers why they keep doing the job, most will answer because they enjoy making a difference.”

Lanza added, “Mr. Curry has advised that during his testimony, Texas Congressman Pete Olson gave credit once again to Hunterdon County’s 9-1-1 Center and the Kingwood Rescue Squad for assisting in the Kingwood, Texas/Kingwood, New Jersey rescue during Hurricane Harvey last year.

We in the County are most proud to have Mr. Curry’s long experience in law enforcement and knowledge of public safety issues recognized by the Congress, and for the dedicated work of our 9-1-1 dispatchers.”