



**World Institute
on Disability**



January 23, 2024

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Senate Democratic Leader

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Republican Leader

The Honorable Steve Scalise
House Republican Leader

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chair
Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science & Transportation

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Democratic Leader

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science & Transportation

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Chair
House Committee on Energy & Commerce

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
House Committee on Energy & Commerce

Dear Members of Congress:

On behalf of the undersigned parties, we write to urge you to support prompt passage of legislation that would provide federal funding to upgrade our nation's emergency response systems to Next Generation 9-1-1 technology ("NG911"). Each year, our nation's 9-1-1 systems answer more than 240 million calls for help. These systems are vital to our communities' safety and security. Unfortunately, most rely on outdated technologies that are increasingly failing and susceptible to cyber-based attacks. Continued reliance on these outdated systems puts our citizens, communities,

and nation at risk. Federal funding is needed to ensure that all parts of the country have access to advanced, secure, and reliable emergency response systems.

Last year, the House Energy and Commerce Committee unanimously approved legislation that would satisfy this important national goal, while also addressing critical spectrum policy objectives. The “*Spectrum Auction Reauthorization Act of 2023*” (H.R. 3565) would provide the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) with new authority to auction spectrum licenses and use proceeds from future spectrum auctions to fund NG911. The legislation would provide up to \$14.8 billion to assist state and local authorities in upgrading their 9-1-1 systems and help to ensure greater system reliability, improved location capabilities, and interoperability amongst 9-1-1 centers. An upgrade to NG911 would also ensure that people with disabilities, especially the deaf, hard of hearing, and blind communities,¹ have equitable access to these vital emergency services. Importantly, these benefits would be achieved without any impact to the federal budget, as NG911 upgrades would be paid for by future spectrum auctions.

We continue to believe that full, nationwide implementation of NG911, along with reauthorization of the FCC’s auction authority and the establishment of a spectrum pipeline for the future, remain important national priorities that are critical to the safety and security of our nation. We urge you to support legislation, consistent with the framework embodied in H.R. 3565, that would achieve these critical goals.

National Association of Counties (NACo)

National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC)

National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates (NASUCA)

National Association of State 911 Administrators (NASNA)

National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC)

NENA: The 9-1-1 Association

Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA)

Industry Council for Emergency Response Technologies (iCERT)

World Institute on Disability (WID)

¹ According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 11% of the US population is deaf, hard of hearing, or blind. (~35 million Americans)