

Statement of
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President

ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC-SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS OFFICIALS (APCO)
INTERNATIONAL
and
in support of the
PUBLIC SAFETY ALLIANCE

Before the
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

Hearing on
**"Public Safety Communications:
Are the needs of our First Responders being met?"**

March 30, 2011

Chairman King, Ranking Member Thompson, and other Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here with you today. It is my deep personal and professional honor to come before this committee on this issue at this time, just a little more than five months ahead of the Ten Year Anniversary of the tragic events of September 11, 2001. The incidents of that day, now recognized around the world as 9/11, have forever changed us as a people, as Americans, in public safety, and as first responders.

I come before the committee today as President of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials, International, also known as APCO International. My professional position is that of Communications Chief for the Delaware State Police, where I oversee a statewide system of emergency and routine communications functions and services. I have served in the field of public safety communications for over 32 years to date. In that time, we in public safety, and in state and local public service, have seen both incredible technological advances and the persistence of long-term, intractable barriers to progress. Since 9/11, the "people" and "technology" barriers have been greatly reduced, but time and resource barriers are still very much present. The looming likelihood of disasters reaching our shores, such as those that have so tragically occurred recently in Japan, New Zealand and elsewhere in the world, should prompt us to

ever-greater urgency in ensuring that full and comprehensive interoperability is indeed the case across all public safety functions and agencies.

Though it has been almost ten years, we shall not forget the loss of those brave men and women who entered burning, crumbling buildings when others fled, who stood below helping the fleeing, the injured and the dead, and who went in afterward and began to clean up, continued to search for survivors, and began to try to restore a sense of calm and order in the midst of the chaos. We are still paying the price for the events of that day, in the health care costs of those who responded and who are now suffering, in the lives of our equally brave soldiers and service members who have fought, suffered injuries - and many have died in Iraq and Afghanistan - and we are paying the price as well for the stepped up vigilance, protection and security that America must provide to meet the challenges that threaten our citizens, our families, our friends, our neighbors and our children. None of us picked this battle. But, we all must step up to meet and exceed this challenge.

Good things must come out of this, too, and you here in Washington, DC need to hear the good news as well as the bad, the successes as well as the shortcomings. So, let me tell you that public safety and first responders are more united than ever in their endeavors to make America safer. We are better organized, more cooperative, less driven by ego and turf than before 9/11. Now, its not perfect, of course, among fire and rescue services, law enforcement, emergency medical services, technology officers (both in public safety and across general government), and civilians and sworn; the badges and the suits. There is considerably less risk today that a turf battle or a personality conflict among professionals will get in the way of getting to an answer and getting the job done, and there is little tolerance for this when it raises its ugly head. While there is more work to be done, and resources are always a problem, especially in the current economic and budgetary environment, we in public safety are seeing great strides in developing, adopting and implementing new procedures, planning processes, exercise practices, professional standards and cooperative operating agreements across agencies and jurisdictions at every level of government, and increasingly extending to the private sector. And a certain degree of it was and is about changing attitudes, appreciating and considering different professional perspectives and priorities, and understanding the importance of working together to meet the new challenges. So, there is good news that we can come and report to you today.

Now, to build on that momentum, we also need your help. As the title of this hearing suggests, coupled with your legislation Mr. Chairman, the needs of first responders are not being met. Mr. Chairman, after 32 years, and being a very

positive person, that is a very hard comment for me to make in public. But the truth is, it's better than it was before 9/11, but it's still not nearly good enough for what our first responders not only need, but also deserve from us. We now have educated young people coming to the public safety profession with daily experience in using wireless devices and technology that provides them with the independence to seek and acquire information in real-time for all of their life activities. Yet they cannot do so in a mission-critical, public safety-grade environment professionally. This is unacceptable and cannot stand. We have investigators at crime scenes still using pads and paper to log in critical evidence and hopefully get it into digital form in a searchable database sometime later. We send firefighters into burning buildings without any schematics beforehand even as the capability is there to access all this information wirelessly. We respond to emergencies in schools equipped with fixed video, but cannot access and share that video remotely or wirelessly in a secure environment today. These are not just things that we need during emergencies and large-scale incidents. We need these capabilities for public safety and first responders every day for routine activities and basic response. How many lives could we save if we could provide EMS and emergency room doctors with video capabilities to see injuries and provide guidance at the scene and while in transport to medical facilities? How much savings could we realize from reducing the amount of helicopter medical dispatches that are proven unnecessary after the fact because medical staff did not have a real-time view of the injuries suffered in a car accident on our nation's roadways? Public safety professionals know that sufficient spectrum for broadband, that leverages commercial build out of broadband infrastructure, but provides a higher level of security, redundancy, priority access, control, secure roaming and geographic coverage -- what we refer to as mission-critical, public safety grade network capabilities -- will allow us to meet these unmet needs.

Chairman King, Ranking Member Thompson, this is why I am here today. To thank you for recognizing public safety's still outstanding and priority need for more radio spectrum and federal funding to help us develop a nationwide interoperable public safety broadband network, as expressed in your legislation, H.R. 607; the Broadband for First Responders Act of 2011. Not only does this legislation fulfill a remaining unmet recommendation of the 9/11 Commission Report, to provide public safety with the ability to establish seamless interoperability throughout the United States. It has the great promise of ultimately providing first responders with what is needed in the field every day and during critical incidents. You need to know that the nation's public safety officials, to include law enforcement, fire, and EMS, and all first responders are united in their top priority for realizing the enactment of legislation into law that finally makes

real this nationwide, interoperable, mission-critical, public safety broadband network capability.

APCO International coordinates the consensus development of nine of the nation's major national public safety associations on public safety broadband legislation through its Public Safety Alliance (PSA) Program. Specifically, the PSA includes the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the National Emergency Management Association, the National Sheriffs Association, the Major Cities Chiefs Association, the Major County Sheriffs Association, the National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Organization, the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association and APCO International itself. Another approximately three-dozen national associations representing a wide range of professionals and stakeholders are in support of the PSA's position to allocate the D block to public safety and help fund the build out and sustainment of this nationwide network. Those supporting organizations include representation of over 2 million rank and file public safety personnel, communications workers, public technologists, state, county and local elected and appointed officials and employees, and many others. The "Big 7" national associations representing state and local government are closely aligned with the PSA and its supporting organizations, and though their previous opposition was widely reported, the National Fraternal Order of Police and National Emergency Number Association have both joined with the rest of public safety in supporting funding and allocation.

For the benefit of those of you that do not know, APCO International was established in 1935 and is the largest public safety communications organization in North America, representing nearly 16,000 members worldwide, most of whom are state or local government employees -- from the highest management levels to the frontline 9-1-1 calltaker, and everyone in between -- the professionals who build, supply, manage and operate communications systems and facilities for police, fire, emergency medical services and other state and local government public safety agencies. APCO serves the needs of more than 200,000 professionals in the public safety communications industry with training, frequency coordination, engineering, licensing, advocacy, and networking services and opportunities. APCO International is the largest FCC-certified frequency coordinator for Part 90, public safety pool channels, and appears regularly before the FCC, Congress and a wide range of federal and international entities on a variety of public safety communications issues. APCO includes law enforcement, fire, EMS, chief technology and information officers, and other public safety related professionals, and is primarily composed of experienced, front line technical experts that are

charged with planning, implementing and overseeing current communications systems in the field, and is solely focused on the area of public safety communications (including voice, data, video, radio and information technologies). Thus, we have long provided an informed safe haven for public safety officials to research, discuss, debate and come to a consensus on the issues of significance to our profession.

Again, I thank you for your time, consideration and shared concern for our nation's safety and security from every day emergencies and crime, to large scale incidents and terrorism. As the leading association for public safety technology professionals, we at APCO International share your unwavering belief that technology, when correctly governed, tested and applied, and when implemented and managed in a cost effective manner, will help us to realize significant progress in our nation's economic development, public safety delivery, and national security. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have at this time.

Professional and Background Information on Bill Carrow

William "Bill" Carrow has been active in public safety communications for over 32 years, the last 15 serving as the Communications Chief of the Delaware State Police in Dover, Delaware. His duties include the overall administration of three 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs or emergency call centers), a computer data center, and a communications technical support unit.

Bill received the Leadership in Technology award from the International Association of Chiefs of Police in 2004 for his accomplishments in the field of communications interoperability with Delaware's neighbors. He was also named Civilian of the Year for the Delaware State Police that same year. Bill has been a member of APCO's Mid-Eastern Chapter since 1997, previously serving on the local Board as Recording Secretary and President. He chaired the chapter's annual conference for five years, and was Chair of APCO International's 73rd Annual Conference in Baltimore, Maryland in 2007.

In October, 2005 Bill was named Group Leader of APCO Operations, and served in that capacity for two years. Bill was very involved in the Project RETAINS Team.