

CONRAD BURNS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Senate Approves Burns - Clinton E-911 Legislation

Bill Provides Incentives to Improve Emergency Communications Nationwide

Washington, D.C. – By unanimous consent, the United States Senate has approved the “Ensuring Needed Help Arrives Near Callers Employing (ENHANCE) 9-1-1” legislation, as part of a telecommunications package H.R. 5419, sponsored by **Senators Conrad Burns (R-MT)** and **Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY)**. This bill will greatly enhance the nation’s system of emergency communications thereby saving lives across the country. This bill passed late last night after Senator Burns insisted the Senate stay in session until final passage. This bill will now go to the president to be signed into law.

“Momentum for this bill has been building and building—it’s incredibly important for the improvement of public safety in our country, and I refused to let the final gavel drop before passing E9-1-1,” **said Burns**. “As co-Chair of the E9-1-1 Caucus I have been working with my colleagues to make sure our safety systems are where they need to be, and I’m glad we were able to pass this important legislation before the close of the 108th Congress.”

“Passage of this bill is an achievement two years in the making. The entire Senate can be proud that it has given approval to legislation that will provide Federal, State and Local governments the tools needed to strengthen our ability to respond and communicate in times of local and national emergencies,” **Senator Clinton said**.

The E-911 bill provides for increased federal coordination between Federal, State and local emergency communications systems, emergency personnel and public safety organizations through the creation of a new task force. It authorizes \$250 million in matching grants to state and local governments and tribal organizations for the purposes of enhancing emergency communications services through planning, infrastructure improvements, equipment purchases and personnel training and acquisition. In addition, the legislation will discourage states from diverting 911 surcharge revenues for non-911 purposes. States that do that will be ineligible for E-911 grants under this bill, and will be publicly identified in biannual report to Congress.

The National Emergency Number Association (NENA) has been a strong supporter of Burns and Clinton and their efforts to advance the issues of 9-1-1 and pass legislation in the 108th Congress. **NENA President Bill McMurray said**: “We praise the leadership of Senators Burns and Clinton and their colleagues in the Congressional E9-1-1 Caucus in passing this important measure. We have fought long and hard on the principle that the same 9-1-1 service should be available to every citizen anytime, anywhere. Today is an important step in achieving that.”

Regarding passage of the bill, **E9-1-1 Institute Executive Director, Gregory L. Rohde said**: “This legislation brings Federal resources, for the first time, to expand and improve our nation’s 9-1-1 system. Thanks to the leadership of Senators Burns and Clinton the U.S. Senate has made a significant step towards realizing the goal of implementing E9-1-1 throughout the country.”

“Since September 11 we have all been working to improve our homeland security and make our nation a more secure place, and I think folks around the country have rallied behind this critical safety bill,” **said Burns**. “Many people have played a part in this, and getting the E9-1-1 bill through the Senate is a huge win. I’m happy to have played a role in passing such a significant piece of legislation.”

“This legislation is the product of a true team approach. From the leaders of the major national police, firefighter and first responder organizations, state administrators of 911 programs nationwide, and members of the Federal Communications Commission, the effort to enhance public safety through this bill has been a truly nationwide effort,” **said Senator Clinton**.

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