

SELECT COMMITTEE ON PENSION POLICY

Constituent Correspondence as of June 18, 2012

Received by OSA	From	To	Subject
3/29/12	Governor Gregoire	Representative Bailey, Chair	Pension Garnishment
5/10/12	Bonnie Anthis	Representative Bailey, Chair	Pension Garnishment
5/14/12	Chris Vance - King County Adult Corrections Guild	Executive Committee, SCPP	2012 Study of Risk Classification of High Risk Employees
5/14/12	Kelly Fox - LEOFF 2 Board	SCPP	2012 Interim Issues
5/18/12	David Westberg	SCPP	Defined Contribution Pension Plans
5/12/12	Richard Warbrouck - Retired Firefighters of Washington	Senator Conway, Chair Representative Bailey, Vice Chair	LEOFF Merger
6/15/12	Keith Flewelling - Washington State APCO - NENA Chapter	SCPP	2012 High-Risk Job Classifications Study (E9-1-1 Telecommunicators)
6/18/12	Gabe Hall - Local 862 Washington Federation of State Employees	SCPP	2012 High-Risk Job Classifications Study (JRA Staff)

Wallis, Keri

From: Chris Vance <cvapv@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, May 14, 2012 12:31 PM
To: Bailey, Rep. Barbara; Conway, Sen. Steve
Cc: kccgprez@gmail.com; kccgvp@gmail.com; Office State Actuary, WA; Gutierrez, Aaron
Subject: 2012 Study of High Risk Employees
Attachments: Pension letters.pdf



KING COUNTY CORRECTIONS GUILD

May 14, 2012

TO: Executive Committee,
Select Committee on Pension Policy

FM: Chris Vance, KCCG Public Affairs Consultant

RE: 2012 Study of Risk Classifications of High Risk Employees

The Select Committee will soon take up the study of “*risk classifications of employees in the state retirement systems that entail either high degrees of physical or psychological risk to the members own safety, or unusually high physical requirements that result in elevated risks of injury or disablement for older employees*” as mandated by SB 6378.

We believe that Corrections Officers – who are required to work until age 60 under both PERS and PSERS - are precisely the type of high risk employees contemplated by this study.

As you discuss your process to undertake this study we would ask that we be permitted to provide input, and to be kept apprised as to your process. We would like to be helpful in any way possible.

We thank you for your continuing attention to this issue. Attached is our past correspondence with you on our retirement issue.

Please contact me if you have questions, or to coordinate our members’ participation. I can be reached at 253-347-9713.

Wallis, Keri

From: Mark Gjurasic [mgjurasic@comcast.net]
Sent: Thursday, June 02, 2011 12:36 PM
To: Schoesler, Sen. Mark; Seaquist, Rep. Larry; Davis, Randy; Office State Actuary, WA
Cc: Wallis, Keri
Subject: PSERS Retirement Request
Attachments: 090109 Letter to SCPP.PDF



KING COUNTY CORRECTIONS GUILD

Thursday, June 2, 2011

TO: **Sen. Mark Schoesler** - Chair– Schoesler.mark@leg.wa.gov
Rep. Larry Seaquist - Larry.Seaquist@leg.wa.gov
Vacant - Vice Chair
Steve Hill, DRS Director – SCPP Request to Forward
Randy Davis, TRS Actives - marysvillecoach@hotmail.com
Glenn Olson, PERS Employers – SCPP Request to Forward
Robert Thurston, WSPRS Retirees – SCPP Request to Forward
Matt Smith, State Actuary – state.actuary@leg.wa.gov

Dear Sen. Schoesler and Rep. Seaquist:

I am following up on my previous request to have the **Select Committee on Pension Policy** to review the **Public Safety Employees Retirement System** (PSERS) which was created in 2004.

As representing the **King County Adult Corrections Guild** (KCACG), we are respectfully **asking for a few minutes** on your **June 21 meeting**, should you have one, or **July 19 meeting** to make a request why PSERS which has not been reviewed since 2004 should be studied to ensure it maintains good public policy.

Since its formulation in 2005, in 2007 the Washington State Legislature changed PSERS Plan II and III. The change allows, with members of 30 years of service, to retire at age 62, instead of 65 without a reduction in benefits. We believe that there should be further review, to see whether the intent, at that time and today, should have been to lower their retirement age to a lower level. For further background information and rationale, please see the attached letter dated September 1, 2009 to then Rep. Steve Conway that further outlines this exploratory request.

Again, the purpose of this letter is to **request that we make a presentation** at the **Select Committee on Pension Policy** on this issue and whether it should be further studied by the Pension Policy Committee and its staff.

Thank you for your time reviewing this information and addressing this policy question.

We would appreciate a spot on the agenda for discussion.

Many thanks.

Mark Gjurasic

King County Adult Corrections Guild Lobbyist

Public Affairs of Washington, LLC

mgjurasic@comcast.net

(360) 481-6000



King County Corrections Guild
6417 S. 143rd Pl.,
Tukwila, WA 98168
Phone: (206) 444-9493

September 1, 2009

Representative Steve Conway
Select Committee on Pension Policy
PO Box 40914
Olympia, WA 98504-0914

Dear Representative Conway,

As you know, the Public Safety Employees' Retirement System in Washington, (PSERS) was created by legislation in the year 2004 to create a separate retirement system for certain public employees whose jobs contain a high degree of physical risk to their own personal safety. PSERS was created to appropriately distinguish these employees serving in high risk positions from other employees in the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) who do not work under conditions that are so dangerous and harsh.

In creating PSERS, the legislature recognized the additional risk that Washington's Public Safety Employees endure, and distinguished these employees by allowing them to retire five years earlier without a reduction of benefits. The standard age for retirement under PERS Plans 2 and 3 was 65 years of age, and the new PSERS plan set the standard retirement age at 60 years of age. It was clear that the legislature believed that allowing these public safety employees to retire five years earlier was an appropriate and sufficient distinction given because of the additional risks and hardships that come with the regular work responsibilities of these public safety employees.

In 2007, the Washington State Legislature changed PERS Plans 2 and 3. This change lowered key PERS standard retirement age requirements, and now allows certain employees that are members of PERS 2 and 3 the ability to retire three years earlier without a reduction to their retirement benefits. The change allows PERS 2 and 3 members with 30 years of service to retire at age 62 instead of 65 without a reduction in benefits. We have also seen the standard retirement age in the Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' (LEOFF) Plan 2 lowered from 58 years, to 55 years, and has most recently to 53 years of age for LEOFF members to retire without a loss of benefits.

The public safety employees in Washington that are members of PERS now have a standard 60 year age limitation for them to retire without a reduction in benefits. The five year earlier retirement distinction that the Legislature believed was appropriate in 2000 has been reduced to a two year difference between PERS and PSERS.

I would like to request the Select Committee on Pension Policy review the question of:
Is there still an appropriate and sufficient distinction between the PERS, PSERS, and LEOFF retirement systems?

Thank you for your time reviewing this information and addressing this policy question.
We appreciate your commitment to helping make our state a good place to work and live.

With Best Regards,

Sergeant Doug Justus
President
King County Corrections Guild



STATE OF WASHINGTON
LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS' AND FIRE FIGHTERS'
PLAN 2 RETIREMENT BOARD

P.O. Box 40918 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0918 • (360) 586-2320 • (360) 586-2329 FAX • recep@leoff.wa.gov

May 11, 2012

To: Board Members, Select Committee on Pension Policy
Judy Schurke, Department of Labor & Industries
Matt Smith, Office of the State Actuary

From: Kelly Fox, Chairman of the Board

Re: 2012 Interim Issues

The Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Plan 2 Retirement Board (LEOFF 2 Board), would like to thank you for the cooperative working relationship we have shared over the years and look forward to a similar partnership in the upcoming year.

There are two topics I'd like to bring to your attention as we all begin preparations for the 2012 interim. It is our hope that the Select Committee on Pension Policy (SCPP), Office of the State Actuary (OSA), Labor and Industries (L&I) and the LEOFF 2 Board can work cooperatively on these issues. I have provided a brief summary of each topic for your reference:

SHB 1552 Garnishment (SCPP)

Governor Gregoire has asked the SCPP to review and make recommendations to the Legislature as to whether additional exceptions to the general exemption of pensions from garnishment would be appropriate, and if so, what level of garnishment would be appropriate. The LEOFF 2 Board would like to work collaboratively with the SCPP on this issue.

2ESB 6378 Risk Class Study (SCPP and L&I)

The bill requests SCPP and L&I to study the issue of risk classifications of employees in the Washington state retirement systems that entail either high degrees of physical or psychological risk to the members' own safety or unusually high physical requirements that result in elevated risks of injury or disablement for older employees. The LEOFF 2 Board would like clarification as to whether LEOFF members would be included in this study, and if so, request to collaborate in the effort, and be included in the distribution of the findings.

Should you have any question, please feel free to contact me at (360) 943-3030 or pres@wscff.org. You may also contact Steve Nelsen, LEOFF 2 Board Executive Director, at (360) 586-2320 or steve.nelsen@leoff.wa.gov.

We would be happy to meet with you to discuss these topics at an upcoming SCPP or LEOFF Plan 2 Retirement Board meeting. Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kelly L Fox". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "K" and "F".

Kelly Fox
Chairman of the Board

From: [Dave](#)
To: [Burkhart, Kelly](#)
Subject: Please distribute to all SCPP Members and include in Committee Correspondence file
Date: Friday, May 18, 2012 2:35:28 PM

Colleagues;

During the Executive Committee meeting following this last week's SCPP meeting, a comment was made relative to issues to be studied in the near future regarding proposals made during the 2012 Legislative Session(s) toward increasing Defined Contribution (DC) Pension Plans and what young people want today. The comment, made by and discussed by the group who have all (no offence intended and myself included) surpassed the threshold of being considered "youth", struck me as incongruent with the young people I come in contact with in my daily endeavors.

Subsequently, I had this interesting study (below), done by a firm who sells 401k's, annuities, etc., brought to my attention. It seems like a trustworthy source as opposed to sources ("Think-tanks") which are more inclined toward political biases.

I thought this might be useful should the debate go any further.

Sincerely,

David Westberg

SERS Actives Member

Youth Appeal: 20-Somethings More Likely To Prefer Guaranteed Income In Retirement Than Older Workers

[Downloads >](#)

May 14, 2012

While most retirement plan participants find guaranteed income appealing, the farther the horizon to retirement, the greater the attraction, study from The Hartford shows

SIMSBURY, Conn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- A new study from The Hartford shows that while many American workers find it appealing to have a guaranteed income in retirement, the younger the employee, the greater the attraction.

"Our research shows that Americans, regardless of age, want the ability to create a guaranteed income for their retirement as traditional pension plans vanish from the scene," said

Patricia Harris, assistant vice president of product management for The Hartford's Retirement Plans Group. "Surprisingly, we also found that the farther retirement appears on the horizon, the greater the appeal of guaranteed income."

The Hartford's Guaranteed Retirement Income study finds that three out of five Americans (64 percent) say their employer's 401(k) or other retirement plan does not allow them to turn their savings into guaranteed income in retirement or they are unsure if it does. Overwhelmingly, those respondents say they would welcome the opportunity:

- Overall, 87 percent of respondents of all ages say they find it "very" or "somewhat" appealing to be able to turn at least a portion of their retirement savings into a guaranteed income.
- 95 percent of workers younger than 30 say the same, the highest of any age group.
- The same sentiment was expressed by 90 percent of those ages 30-39, 89 percent of ages 40-49, 88 percent of ages 50-59, and 77 percent of age 60 and older.

"Although the economy and the financial markets are on the mend, many younger employees are seeking sources of greater long-term financial security," Harris observed. "Few younger workers have access to traditional pension plans and many wonder whether Social Security will continue in its current form. They are clearly saying they want the ability to create a guaranteed income for themselves in retirement."

The Hartford's study, which surveyed 2,500 Americans ages 18 and older earlier this spring, was conducted following the introduction of The Hartford Lifetime Income[®] (HLI), an investment option that allows 401(k) participants to use their savings to create a pension-like income in retirement.

"Overall, the study confirms our own experience since January in offering Hartford Lifetime Income through employer-sponsored retirement plans across the country," said Harris, the actuary who designed the patented investment option. "We see broad acceptance of lifetime income among 401(k) participants of all ages, even younger workers who are decades from retiring."

However, The Hartford's study did pinpoint some differences related to gender and income. For instance, women (89 percent) have a greater preference for guaranteed retirement income than men (84 percent).

Household income also impacts the level of appeal, although not in a linear fashion. The concept of guaranteed retirement income appeals most to those with a combined annual household income of \$50,000-\$74,000. A total of 92 percent in that demographic would like

their employer to offer a guaranteed income option compared to 87 percent of those earning \$30,000-\$49,000, 86 percent earning less than \$30,000, and 84 percent earning \$75,000 or more.

"As a leading provider of retirement plans, The Hartford is acutely aware of the need for Americans to not only save for retirement but to use a portion of their savings to create a guaranteed retirement income that they cannot outlive," Harris said. "We recommend that everyone should ensure they have enough guaranteed income from a variety of sources, including Social Security, a pension if they have one and retirement savings, to at least cover their basic living expenses when they retire."

About The Hartford

The Hartford Financial Services Group Inc. (NYSE: HIG) is a leading provider of insurance and wealth management services for millions of consumers and businesses worldwide. The Hartford is consistently recognized for its superior service, its sustainability efforts and as one of the world's most ethical companies. More information on the company and its financial performance is available at www.thehartford.com. Join us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TheHartford. Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/TheHartford.



Retired Firefighters of Washington

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JUN 12 2012

Office of
The State Actuary

Richard C. Warbrouck
President

June 8, 2012

The Honorable Senator Steve Conway
Chair, Select Committee on Pension Policy
8121 S. Park Ave
Tacoma, WA 98408

The Honorable Representative Barbara Bailey
Vice Chair, Select Committee on Pension Policy
PO Box 374
Oak Harbor, WA 98277

Mr. Matt Smith, State Actuary
Office of the State Actuary
PO Box 40914
Olympia, WA 98504-0914

Dear Senator Conway, Representative Bailey and Mr. Smith,

For the past two legislative sessions the Washington State Council of Firefighters (WSCFF) and the Washington Council of Police & Sheriffs (WACOPS) have been promoting a merger of the LEOFF I and LEOFF II Retirement Systems. We angrily refer to this as a raid on the LEOFF I Retirement System. As the 2011 legislative session was drawing to a close House Bill 2097 was introduced. The proponents of the bill told legislators that the LEOFF I groups were in support of the bill, which couldn't be further from the truth as we were never consulted or forewarned that the bill would be introduced. We were somewhat surprised when we learned that the Chair of the LEOFF II Board wearing another hat as the head lobbyist for the WSCFF, and the Executive Director of the LEOFF II Board Steve Nelsen were promoting this legislation and in fact Steve Nelsen later admitted to drafting the legislation. We found this to be somewhat unprecedented for two reasons. The LEOFF II Board had never scheduled a public hearing on this subject and the board never passed a motion in support of any plan merger legislation. This appeared very inappropriate because if the legislation had passed it would have had a tremendous impact on the LEOFF II Board. Secondly, because Mr. Nelsen, as the Executive Assistant, had in the past written letters and discussed less important issues with the Select Committee on Pension Policy, chose not to contact the Select Committee on this subject. If this

bill had been signed into law the LEOFF I Retirement System would have been removed from the jurisdiction of the Select Committee and put under the jurisdiction of the LEOFF II Board.

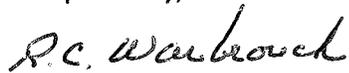
Though HB 2097 never received a hearing, the legislature appropriated seventy-five thousand dollars and directed the State Actuary to conduct a study during the interim and forward the study to the legislature by December 15, 2011. We participated in the study and didn't feel that any information was identified to indicate that a merger was in the best interest of the members, the employers, the citizens or the State of Washington.

Early in the 2012 legislative session before the Actuary's December 15, 2011 report was read, two bills were introduced to merge the two retirement systems. HB 2350 and SB 6563 a companion bill were introduced as a surprise to us and again before the LEOFF II Board had taken formal action on a merger and without a public hearing or consultation with the Select Committee on Pension Policy.

We feel that this subject and the above legislative process should be reviewed by the Select Committee on Pension Policy. We therefore request that this subject be placed on the agenda of a Select Committee meeting during the interim. We are seeking the assurance that if one of the three referred to bills is reintroduced or if a new bill is introduced addressing a merger, the Select Committee will schedule a Public Hearing and render a decision to support or oppose the bill.

We would expect that the Select Committee members with their expertise and legislative influence would protect the over 8000 LEOFF I members, the city and county employers and the citizens of the State of Washington now under the committee's jurisdiction.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R.C. Warbrouck".

Richard C. Warbrouck



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JUN 15 2012

Office of
The State Actuary

Washington State Legislature
Select Committee on Pension Policy
P.O. Box 40914
Olympia, WA 98504-0914

June 12, 2012

To the Select Committee on Pension Policy and Staff,

The Washington State Chapters of the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO) and the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) have recently become aware of the potential for and incidence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in E9-1-1 Telecommunicators (study attached).

As a result of this knowledge, the Washington Chapter conducted a survey of Washington State communications centers taking E9-1-1 calls. Responses were received from 62% of agencies taking E9-1-1 calls, and included county, municipal, and federal agencies representing over 600 telecommunicators. Analysis of the results provided some thought-provoking information:

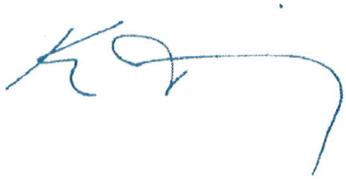
- 69% of telecommunicators are between the ages of 26 and 45 years.
- 11% work as telecommunicators for 20 or more years.
- 63% of responding agencies stated that telecommunicators have left employment with that agency due to the stress of the job.
- 96.7% of responding agencies have had telecommunicators retire, leave service, or be terminated because they were unable to perform the functions of the job versus retiring with dignity at the age of 65.
- The average age of those terminated in the past 10 years is 37 years.

The Chapter's limited survey, in addition to the study indicates that the career life span for a telecommunicator is relatively short. The Chapter believes that this is very likely due to the stresses of the job and the increased technological demands.

As we approach the age of Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1), and anticipate the receipt of text, photo, and video, the Chapter is convinced that the technical expertise required to perform the functions of the job will increase astronomically. In addition to that, the visualization of crime, medical, and fire scenes will add untold stress to the intricacies of an already detailed and technical position. It will become extremely difficult for E9-1-1 centers in Washington State to recruit and retain staff.

The Washington Chapters of APCO and NENA urge the Selection Committee on Pension Policy to consider the inclusion of telecommunicators in a public safety early retirement program. The benefits to the individual who has dedicated a career to public safety as well as to the agency attempting to recruit and retain staff are well worthy of your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'KF', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Keith Flewelling, President
Washington State APCO – NENA Chapter

BRIEF REPORT

Duty-Related Trauma Exposure in 911 Telecommunicators: Considering the Risk for Posttraumatic Stress

Heather Pierce and Michelle M. Lilly

Department of Psychology, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois, USA

Peritraumatic distress may increase the risk for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in police officers. Much less is known about emotional reactions and PTSD symptomatology in 911 telecommunicators. The current study assessed duty-related exposure to potentially traumatic calls, peritraumatic distress, and PTSD symptomatology in a cross-sectional, convenience sample of 171 telecommunicators. Results showed that telecommunicators reported high levels of peritraumatic distress and a moderate, positive relationship was found between peritraumatic distress and PTSD symptom severity ($r = .34$). The results suggest that 911 telecommunicators are exposed to duty-related trauma that may lead to the development of PTSD, and that direct, physical exposure to trauma may not be necessary to increase risk for PTSD in this population.

Research has begun to examine the mental health impact of occupational exposure to potentially traumatic events in police officers, with rates of duty-related presumed posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) ranging from 7% to 19% (Marmar et al., 2006). These numbers are notably greater than the lifetime prevalence rate of 7.8%, and 12-month prevalence rate of 3.5%, observed in the general population in the United States (Kessler, Chiu, Demler, & Walters, 2005; Kessler, Sonnega, Bromet, Hughes, & Nelson, 1995). Yet, research on PTSD in 911 telecommunicators, who may experience significant duty-related trauma exposure, has remained largely absent.

Telecommunicators rely on their interrogative skills to assess an incident, secure the emergency scene, and send appropriate help, all within minutes of answering a call. Crucial to success is the ability to remain calm and suppress emotional reactions. Yet little is known about the emotional reactions and mental health of telecommunicators. It is possible that physical distance from trauma (i.e., limited risk of physical injury) serves to buffer against posttrauma psychopathology; research has shown that threat to an individual's physical integrity heightens risk for the development of PTSD symptoms (e.g., Carlier, Lamberts, & Gersons, 2000). Telecommunicators, however, have limited

control over the event and may encounter extremely distressed callers and/or aversive details of traumatic events. Given these factors, one might expect the level of emotional distress surrounding this work to be elevated in telecommunicators compared to other professions. In fact, a dissertation about telecommunicators found that the majority of telecommunicators in the sample reported experiencing peritraumatic distress in reaction to at least one call handled while on duty as a telecommunicator (Troxell, 2008).

Research has demonstrated that intense emotional reactions during the experience of traumatic exposure are strongly associated with PTSD symptoms and a significant, positive relationship between peritraumatic distress and PTSD symptoms has been observed in police officers (Brunet et al., 2001). To date, research has not assessed PTSD symptomatology in telecommunicators nor examined if the association between peritraumatic distress and PTSD symptoms holds for this population. The goal of the current study was to examine work-related trauma exposure, peritraumatic distress, and PTSD symptomatology in telecommunicators. The types of calls handled by telecommunicators were coded to determine whether certain types of calls were more associated with intense fear, helplessness, or horror, and whether particular types of calls were more consistently identified by the sample as the "worst." We hypothesized that telecommunicators would report high levels of peritraumatic distress given their relative lack of control over potentially traumatic events and that there would be a significant, positive relationship between peritraumatic distress and PTSD symptoms. We therefore expected the rate of probable, current PTSD to be elevated in this sample.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Michelle M. Lilly, Northern Illinois University, Psychology-Computer Science Building, DeKalb, IL 60302. E-mail: mlilly1@niu.edu

Method

Participants and Procedure

Recruitment was conducted via letters and advertisements sent to randomly selected agencies in the Midwest, professional association list serves, and online forums and social media outlets (i.e., Facebook). The inclusion criterion was at least part-time work as a telecommunicator in the past year, although all participants currently worked as a telecommunicator. No exclusion criteria were used. Participants were given the option to complete a hard copy or online version of the survey. Informed consent was presented online or in hard copy prior to the questionnaires. No inducement was offered for participation. The study was approved by the university's institutional review board. Subject recruitment began in October 2010 and continued for 7 months.

The convenience sample recruited for this study comprised 171 current, professional telecommunicators. Twenty-four different states were represented, though the majority were from the Midwest ($n = 76$) and Southwest ($n = 58$) regions. The sample was predominately female ($n = 126$) and Caucasian ($n = 131$), with a mean age of 38.85 years ($SD = 9.61$). Participants reported an average of 11.85 ($SD = 8.16$) years of service. The majority of the sample was married ($n = 88, 52\%$), and at minimum had attended college or vocational training ($n = 138, 81\%$).

Measures

Potentially traumatic events/calls. The Potentially Traumatic Events/Calls measure (Troxell, 2008) is a 21-item measure that assesses career exposure to different types of potentially traumatizing 911 calls. The measure is a checklist that determines whether participants have been exposed to that type of call and asks for an estimate of how many times he or she has been exposed to that type of call. For the purposes of this study, a frequency count was used to determine whether or not each participant had been exposed to that type of call. The measure also includes a yes or no question for each type of call that assesses whether participants experienced intense fear, helplessness, or horror in reaction to that type of call. A significant correlation has been found between the total amount of traumatic calls/events and both burnout, $r(418) = .28, p < .001$, and secondary traumatic stress, $r(418) = .40, p < .001$ (Troxell, 2008).

Posttraumatic Stress Diagnostic Scale (PDS). The PDS (Foa, 1995) assessed PTSD symptoms in the past month. Participants were provided with the following prompt: "If possible, please identify an upsetting incident that you handled while on duty at a communications center. Though you may have had many traumatic events occur, can you tell me about one you remember as the worst, or the one that has maybe stuck with you the most?" Participants briefly described their chosen event and a total PTSD symptom score was generated by tallying re-

sponses to the 17 symptom items. Response options for the 17 items were 0 = *Not at all or only one time*, 1 = *Once a week or less/once in awhile*, 2 = *2-4 Times a week/half the time*, and 3 = *5 or More times a week/almost always*. Internal consistency for the PTSD symptom score was $\alpha = .85$ in this sample. A team of four researchers (including the two authors) coded the worst event descriptions in terms of (a) whether the event qualified for Criterion A1 of PTSD according to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (4th ed., text rev.; *DSM-IV-TR*; American Psychiatric Association, 2000), and (b) what type of duty-related call was represented. Interrater reliability was not examined.

Peritraumatic Distress Inventory (PDI). The PDI (Brunet et al., 2001) was used to measure peritraumatic emotional distress related to the participants' worst duty-related event. A specific time range for when that event occurred was not assessed. A total score was calculated by averaging responses across all items with scores for each item ranging between 0 = (*Not at all*) and 4 = (*Extremely true*). For the purpose of this study, three items that were deemed unlikely to be relevant to telecommunicators were omitted (i.e., "I felt afraid for my safety"). Internal consistency was $\alpha = .86$ in the present sample.

Data Analysis

Descriptive data and hypothesis testing was performed using SPSS Version 19.0. A frequency count was first used to examine participants' exposure to different types of calls, as well as the percentage of participants that reported experiencing intense fear, helplessness, or horror in reaction to that type of call. Consensus coding was performed by four researchers (including the two authors) to examine whether the participant reported a worst event that qualified for Criterion A1 of PTSD, and further, what type of call was represented. This information was examined to determine whether particular types of calls were more consistently identified as the worst among telecommunicators. Comparison of item means on the PDI between the present sample and Brunet et al.'s (2001) sample of police officers and civilians was made by calculating Cohen's d to examine effect size of observed differences. Pearson r was then used to examine the relationship between peritraumatic distress and PTSD symptom scores. Finally, the percentage of participants with probable, current PTSD was examined by using a cutoff score of 28 or higher to denote the presence of probable, current PTSD and a frequency score was generated.

Results

The average number of different types of calls experienced by participants assessed by the Potentially Traumatic Events/Calls measure was 15.32 ($SD = 3.50$) out of 21. Participants reported

Table 1
Frequency of Receiving, Reacting With Fear, Helplessness, or Horror, and Identifying as Worst for Types of 911 Calls

Type of 911 call	Received		Reacted		Worst	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Suicide	165	96.5	64	37.4	22	12.9
Domestic violence	163	95.3	66	38.6	3	1.8
MVA with severe injury or fatality	161	94.1	58	33.9	16	9.4
Armed robbery	147	86.0	37	21.6	1	0.01
Child sexual assault	136	79.5	66	38.6	0	0
Homicide	133	77.8	40	23.4	16	9.4
Natural disaster	133	77.8	46	26.9	3	1.8
Unexpected death or injury of a child	133	77.8	94	55.0	28	16.4
Other disaster or disturbing event	130	76.0	74	43.3	6	3.5
Calls involving friends and/or family	94	55.0	52	30.4	11	6.4
Officer involved shooting	54	31.6	44	25.7	17	9.9
Unexpected death of an adult	–	–	–	–	17	9.9
Battery and assault ^a	–	–	–	–	8	4.7
Adult sexual assault ^a	–	–	–	–	4	2.3

Note. MVA = Motor vehicle accident.

^aThese events were not assessed separately on the Potentially Traumatic Events/Calls measure; therefore, a percentage for that particular type of coded event and reaction could not be assessed.

experiencing fear, helplessness, or horror in reaction to 32% of the different types of calls experienced. Table 1 shows the number and percentage of participants for the following: (a) experienced that type of call, (b) endorsed criterion A2 in reaction to that type of call, and (c) identified that type of call as the worst experienced. The most commonly (16.4%) identified worst call was the unexpected injury or death of a child, with suicidal callers next (12.9%), followed by officer involved shootings (9.9%) and calls involving the unexpected death of an adult (9.9%).

The average modified peritraumatic distress score was 2.58 ($SD = 0.93$). The average scores for each group was as follows: 1.3 (officers), 1.69 (civilians), and 2.93 (telecommunicators). Table 2 compares PDI items from the present sample to Brunet et al.'s (2001) police officer and civilian samples, including Cohen's d effect sizes for observed differences. Cohen's d was calculated by hand using the means and standard deviations of PDI items from the present sample and those presented in Brunet et al. (2001), and then double checked using an online effect size calculator (<http://www.uccs.edu/~faculty/lbecker/#meansandstandarddeviations>). The telecommunicators reported having experienced peritraumatic distress in reaction to many of the different types of calls. It is possible that this is due to the nature of the position, but could also result from having a sample comprised predominantly of women, who typically report greater peritraumatic distress than men (Creamer, McFarlane, & Burgess, 2005). As hypothesized, there was a significant correlation between peritraumatic distress and PTSD symptoms, $r(170) = .34, p < .001$. The average score for PTSD symptoms was 7.07 ($SD = 8.13$). There were

3.5% of the participants who scored at or above the cutoff score of 28 (Coffey, Dansky, Falsetti, Saladin, & Brady, 1998).

Discussion

To date, this is the only published study of which we are aware that examined the relationship between duty-related trauma exposure, peritraumatic distress, and PTSD symptoms in telecommunicators. Results showed that calls frequently encountered by telecommunicators can produce feelings of intense fear, helplessness, or horror. A disproportionate amount of worst calls experienced by the sample involved harm to a child or were calls that involved a personal or professional relationship with the victim/caller (i.e., police officers, emergency medical technicians, and firefighters).

As hypothesized, and similar to Troxell (2008), peritraumatic distress reported by telecommunicators was high and occurred in reaction to an average of 32% of different types of calls that may be experienced by telecommunicators. As predicted, a positive relationship was found between peritraumatic distress and PTSD. Given that lifetime and 12-month PTSD symptomatology were not assessed in this study, direct comparison to the epidemiological rates for PTSD observed in the U.S. population cannot be made (Kessler et al., 2005; Kessler et al., 1995). The 3.5% who scored above the cut off we used, however, might suggest that increased risk is present for telecommunicators, as 3.5% is equivalent to the 12-month prevalence rate found by Kessler et al. (2005) and does not account for telecommunicators that may have qualified for probable PTSD in the past 12 months, but whose symptoms

Table 2
Comparison of Selected Peritraumatic Distress Inventory Means From Three Samples

Abbreviated item	Officer (<i>N</i> = 702)		Civilian (<i>N</i> = 418)		911 Telecommunicators (<i>N</i> = 171)		Officer <i>d</i>	Civilian <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Felt helpless to do more	1.7	1.4	2.2	1.4	3.5	1.4	1.29	0.93
Felt sadness and grief	2.1	1.5	2.8	1.4	3.5	1.4	0.96	0.50
Felt frustrated, angry could not do more	2.1	1.5	2.7	1.3	3.5	1.4	0.96	0.59
Felt guilt more was not done	1.0	1.3	1.3	1.4	3.5	1.4	1.85	1.57
Felt ashamed of my emotions	0.4	0.9	0.9	1.3	3.3	1.5	2.34	1.71
Felt worried about safety of those on scene	1.7	1.5	1.1	1.5	2.3	1.6	0.39	0.77
Felt would lose emotional control	0.7	1.1	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.3	0.66	0.07
Horrified by what happened	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.5	3.1	1.7	1.00	0.94
Had physiological reactions	1.5	1.4	2.0	1.5	1.9	1.4	0.29	0.07
Felt I might pass out	0.2	0.8	0.7	1.2	3.2	1.6	2.37	1.77

Note. Items were omitted given that they may not apply for telecommunicators who are not on the scene of the traumatic call. Adapted from "The Peritraumatic Distress Inventory: A proposed measure of PTSD Criterion A2," by A. Brunet, D. S. Weiss, T. J. Metzler, S. R. Best, T. C. Neylan, C. Rogers, . . . C. R. Marmar, 2001, *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 158, pp. 1480-1485. Copyright 2001 by the American Psychiatric Association.

have remitted prior to completion of the survey. This suggests that although telecommunicators are physically distant from the traumatic scene and their personal integrity is rarely threatened, they may not be buffered from the development of PTSD symptoms. Furthermore, a self-selection bias may have also skewed results. The sample could have been a particularly resilient group of telecommunicators, or telecommunicators with current PTSD symptomatology may have not self-selected for participation in the study due to the avoidance seen as part of the PTSD symptom picture. It is also possible that highly distressed telecommunicators quickly remove themselves from the occupation and are not well-represented among current telecommunicators. It is therefore possible that rates of PTSD symptoms would be even higher in a sample of telecommunicators not selected out of convenience.

The level of distress in the sample supports the proposed criteria for PTSD in the *DSM-5*. According to proposed Criterion A4, telecommunicators' experiences would qualify them for a diagnosis of PTSD because they are exposed to duty-related aversive details of traumatic events. Though telecommunicators may not be physically present at a traumatic event, nor have a personal relationship with the victim, exposure to duty-related aversive details can be sufficient to induce PTSD symptomatology that is severe enough to be consistent with a probable diagnosis.

The study was limited by a cross-sectional design and self-selection biases. In regard to the former, it is not possible to

determine whether the development of PTSD symptoms may have colored retrospective reporting of peritraumatic distress. Further, research has shown that the consistency of retrospective reporting of peritraumatic distress is questionable, particularly for individuals that go on to develop more severe PTSD symptomatology (David, Akerib, Gaston, & Brunet, 2010), leading to limitations on the conclusions that can be drawn from this study's cross-sectional design. Considering the frequency of exposure to upsetting calls, however, and the heightened peritraumatic distress, as well as the rate of PTSD symptoms despite a self-selection bias, future research is warranted. Posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms that may be present in telecommunicators can impair decision-making abilities and functioning, which could pose significant risk to the general population that relies on them to quickly and effectively coordinate an emergency response. Finally, trauma exposure that has occurred outside of that experienced on duty should be considered in future work with this population, as PTSD symptoms among this sample may have been due to trauma that occurred outside of work and not directly related to duty-related experiences.

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Wallis, Keri

From: Gabe Hall <mrsoup@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 18, 2012 2:18 PM
To: Office State Actuary, WA; Matt Zuvich
Subject: JRA staff joining PSERS
Attachments: Pension document.doc

To: The Select Committee on Pension Policy

I am writing you to ask that you make employees of the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration eligible for the Public Safety Employees Retirement System (PSERS). The PSERS was created to allow employees who work in high risk jobs, with high risk offenders, to be able to retire before age and infirmity make it too dangerous for them to work with that clientele. We in JRA work with volatile, dangerous youths that are, in many cases, highly aggressive. There is a high need for alertness and physical ability when supervising these youths. Fights can break out any time, caused by something as little as one resident maintaining eye contact for a second or two longer than the other resident feels is a “respectful” amount of time. The number of gang involved youth in JRA has increased significantly in recent years, leading to a marked increase in assaults by residents on each other. We staff are required to physically intervene when resident fight. We have seen an increase in staff injuries that coincides with the increase in resident fights. It does not make much sense to have 65 year old staff trying to physically control young, fit, and in many cases, large young men intent on doing damage to each other. Unlike staff, residents are not constrained from punching, kicking, biting, pinching and otherwise flailing at staff when we attempt to control them.

We staff are required to attend and pass annual refresher trainings on Dealing With Resistive Youth (DWRY) techniques. This training is certified through the Criminal Justice Training Center, as are the instructors. During these trainings, we must demonstrate proficiency in restraint techniques designed to ensure the safety of both staff and residents caught up in an incident. This involves a high level of physical ability to pass the training. Many staff have been injured while taking the original 40 hour course and the annual 8 hour refreshers. Some staff have been injured so badly during these trainings that they have had to be medically separated from their jobs. We are seeing ever higher numbers of older staff injured during these trainings.

Other employees who deal with this same population are currently eligible for PSERS. Staff of city and county juvenile detention facilities can join PSERS. Our residents come from these facilities. The detention centers generally have the residents for a few weeks or months, while they are being held for trial. Once the youths have been sentenced, they come to JRA, often for terms of several years.

So, in conclusion, it makes sense for JRA employees to be included in PSERS, for the very same reasons that PSERS was established: to allow employees in high risk jobs to not have to continue to work until there is an elevated risk of injury to older employees.

Thank you for your attention to this matter
Gabe Hall; President Local 862 of the Washington Federation of State Employees
Member of the Executive Board of Council 28 of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees