



NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

July 27, 2026

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell:

On behalf of the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA), representing 3,081 sheriffs nationwide, we write to share our perspective on H.R. 7386, the First Responder Network Authority Act, which the Senate is now considering.

Law enforcement officers are on the front lines of public safety in urban, suburban, and rural communities, and we understand firsthand how mission-critical communications can mean the difference between life and death. The Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network (NPSBN) holds enormous promise for the law enforcement community, and we support the goal of ensuring that FirstNet's statutory authority is preserved beyond its 2027 sunset date.

However, the reality of the effectiveness of this model is apparent, it has not worked as envisioned. The reauthorization process represents an opportunity to improve this critical program.

As we stated in our January 21, 2025 letter to you and our March 24, 2026 letter to the House Energy and Commerce Committee, the first responder communication landscape has changed drastically over the past decade, and it is imperative that any reauthorization legislation meaningfully improve FirstNet's operations, not simply extend existing structures. Specifically, we continue to urge you and your colleagues to address the following concerns as the Senate considers this legislation:

- **Accountability and Transparency:** The Department of Commerce Inspector General has issued multiple reports highlighting a lack of transparency within FirstNet and concerning AT&T's compliance with the FirstNet contract. Most recently, Report No. OIG-26-015-A (April 9, 2026) found that FirstNet Authority's approach to measuring service availability fails to provide a comprehensive assessment, covering only a fraction of cell sites and of the NPSBN's approximately 3-million-square-mile coverage footprint. Additionally, any

reauthorization must include strong accountability mechanisms including a prohibition on the use of government funds to support contractors, events, and marketing for any carrier, and to ensure public safety agencies receive the full value and benefit of this public investment.

- Interoperability and Redundancy: FirstNet's current structure directs all infrastructure funding through a single carrier, which limits redundancy and places public safety at risk. We urge the Senate to ensure that all infrastructure funded with FirstNet Authority resources benefits the full public safety user base.

While we do support the reauthorization of FirstNet and the continuation of the Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network, we also believe that reauthorization is the critical moment to ensure the network delivers on its promise to all of public safety. We remain deeply committed to ensuring that the next generation of public safety communications serves every first responder, in every jurisdiction. The communities we serve expect nothing less.

We look forward to working collaboratively with the committee, our colleagues in the public safety coalition, and all stakeholders to craft legislation that strengthens and improves FirstNet for the benefit of communities nationwide.

Sincerely,



Sheriff Troy Wellman
Moody County, South Dakota
President
National Sheriffs' Association



Justin Smith
Executive Director, CEO
National Sheriffs' Association