

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2022 REGULAR SESSION**

**Introduced**

### **House Bill 4390**

BY DELEGATES GRAVES, YOUNG, GARCIA, SUMMERS,  
ESPINOSA, SKAFF, HOLSTEIN, JENNINGS, AND MANDT

[Introduced January 25, 2022; Referred to the  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs and Homeland  
Security then Government Organization]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §29-32-1 and §29-32-2 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as  
2 amended, all relating to including 911 operators as eligible Medal of Valor recipients in  
3 West Virginia; and including them on the First Responders Honor Board.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

## **ARTICLE 32. MEDAL OF VALOR.**

### **29-32-1. Medal of Valor.**

1 (a) There is hereby established a Medal of Valor to be awarded to firefighters, law-  
2 enforcement officers, 911 operators, and emergency medical services personnel who distinguish  
3 themselves conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of their lives above and beyond  
4 the call of duty in the performance of their duties.

5 (b) A Medal of Valor may only be awarded in the manner set forth in this article.

### **§29-32-2. First Responders Honor Board.**

1 (a) The First Responders Honor Board is hereby established within the Department of  
2 Homeland Security as an advisory board to the Legislature. The purpose of the board is to  
3 recommend to the Legislature firefighters, law-enforcement officers, 911 operators, and  
4 emergency medical services personnel in West Virginia who have distinguished themselves  
5 conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of their lives above and beyond the call of  
6 duty in the performance of their duties to be awarded a Medal of Valor.

7 (b) *Board membership.* —

8 (1) The board shall consist of two members from each of the state's senatorial districts.  
9 Each State Senator shall appoint one member representing his or her district.

10 (2) The board shall be composed of firefighters; fire chiefs; law enforcement officials such  
11 as sheriffs, correctional officers, and police chiefs; emergency medical services personnel;  
12 medical officials; doctors; 911 operators; and other professionals who are qualified to evaluate  
13 and determine whether the actions of firefighters, law-enforcement officers, 911 operators and  
14 emergency medical services personnel rise to the level of being above and beyond the call of

15 duty.

16 (3) Members shall serve a three-year term and shall serve without compensation.

17 (4) The board shall annually select a member to serve as the chair. The board shall hold  
18 at least one annual meeting. The date, time, and place of the meetings shall be established upon  
19 its own resolution or at the call of the chair of the board. Notice of each meeting shall be given to  
20 each member by the chair and in compliance with the open meetings laws of the state. A majority  
21 of the members of the board serving at any one time constitutes a quorum for the transaction of  
22 business.

23 (c) The board may consider candidates for the Medal of Valor who are identified by  
24 members of the board or by other citizens, and may design a system for the receipt of those  
25 recommendations.

26 (d) The board shall review identified individuals to determine if those firefighters, law-  
27 enforcement officers, 911 operators and emergency medical services personnel have gone above  
28 and beyond the call of duty in their professional capacities. Upon determination that a firefighter,  
29 law-enforcement officer, 911 operator or emergency medical services personnel is worthy of this  
30 honor, the board shall submit the nomination to the Speaker of the House of Delegates and the  
31 President of the Senate for consideration by the Legislature no later than the first day of the next  
32 regular session.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to include 911 operators as eligible Medal of Valor recipients in West Virginia, and including them on the First Responders Honor Board.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.