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Washington, D.C. -- Rep. Anna G. Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, applauded last night's Congressional passage of Enhanced 911 (E-911) legislation she has championed for more than eight years.

"With Senate passage we're one step closer to delivering the emergency services Americans demand and deserve," Eshoo said. "Many Americans purchase mobile phones specifically for emergency situations, yet less than 60 percent of our nation's emergency call centers have the technology needed to precisely locate mobile phone callers. This must change and will with passage of my legislation."

While most state governments tax mobile phone users for upgrades and implementation of E-911 services, the revenue is often diverted for other uses. The E-911 Implementation Act, introduced in the House by Reps. Eshoo and John Shimkus, R-Ill., and in the Senate by Sens. Conrad Burns, R-Mon., and Hillary Clinton, D-NY, authorizes federal matching grants to states, conditioned on their directing funding back into E-911 services and technology.

Specifically, the legislation:

- Authorizes \$250 million in grants over five years to upgrade emergency call center facilities;

- Establishes an E-911 Coordination Office operated jointly by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to improve coordination among federal, state and local public safety officials

- Penalizes states for redirecting E-911 funds collected from consumer's mobile phone bills; and

- Directs the FCC to study E-911 implementation in rural areas of our country.

E-911 legislation unanimously passed the House late last year, but was stalled in the Senate until this week. The House and Senate finally agreed to a modified bill which passed the Senate by unanimous consent late last night and will now be sent to the President for his signature.

"This bill comes at a critical moment, as nearly a third of all 911 calls are made on mobile phones, an estimated 180,000 calls per day," Eshoo continued. "In these situations, when every second counts, the improved location technology and reaction times this legislation promotes will save lives."

National Emergency Number Association (NENA) President Bill McMurray said, "We praise the leadership of Rep. Eshoo and her colleagues in the Congressional E-911 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."

"The entire 9-1-1 community owes a debt of gratitude to the hard work of Rep. Eshoo in passing vital legislation to improve our nation's safety, security and homeland defense through citizen activated emergency response technologies like E-911," McMurray said.

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