February 24, 2014

Delegate Kathy J. Byron
Commonwealth of Virginia House of Delegates
523 Leesville Rd
Lynchburg, VA 24502

Dear House Delegate Byron,

At the request of our members who provide prehospital patient care in the Commonwealth of Virginia, I am writing this letter to inform you of our opposition to Virginia House Bill 1010, which would drastically reduce the number of hours of training required for certification as an emergency medical services first responder (EMR) and technician (EMT). If passed and signed into law, this legislation would deny the people of the Commonwealth of Virginia access to high quality prehospital care because EMRs and EMTs would not receive the appropriate training to effectively serve their patients.

Formed in 1975, the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT) is the nation’s only organization solely dedicated to representing the professional interests of all emergency medical services (EMS) practitioners, including paramedics, emergency medical technicians, emergency medical responders and other professionals working in prehospital emergency medicine. NAEMT members work in all sectors of EMS, including government service agencies, fire departments, hospital-based ambulance services, private companies, volunteer agencies, industrial and special operations settings, and in the military.

We believe that all patients are entitled to high quality and safe prehospital medical care delivered by qualified EMS practitioners. The appropriate level of clinical education, consistent with national EMS education standards, is essential to the delivery of high quality, evidence-based medical care. All medical occupations have education requirements designed to ensure that those individuals who provide care are adequately prepared — these requirements protect patients. Reducing EMS education as proposed in Virginia Bill 1010 would deny those charged with the responsibility for prehospital care the education they need, and would endanger their patients.

We understand that education and training require funding. There are many ways to reduce the cost of educating your EMS workforce including sharing and reusing textbooks, online training, and accessing discounts through group purchases. Rather than cutting education requirements, we urge your state to consider these and other cost saving alternatives.

We urge you to reconsider your proposed legislation and hope that you will contact us if we can provide you with additional information or resources on this matter.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Don Lundy, BS, NREMT-P
President, NAEMT