

**To the Honorable Members of the Mecklenburg County
Board of Commissioners,**

My name is Jordan Hood, and I proudly serve as Vice President of the Charlotte Firefighters Association Local 660. I come before you tonight not only on behalf of our members but for the sake of every citizen and visitor in the City of Charlotte and greater Mecklenburg County.

Like many who have spoken before me, and many of you who have served alongside us in various capacities, I wear many hats in service to this community. Over the past twenty-plus years, I've had the honor of serving in fire and EMS organizations—large and small, urban and rural, and even within a structure nearly identical to the current model operating in our region.

Unfortunately, I have also witnessed, time and again, the same systemic failure that plagues EMS delivery across the country: the erosion of our most vital priority—rapid response and swift hospital transport. It is a national problem, yes, but one that continues to manifest here at home with alarming and increasingly dire consequences.

I could speak with justified frustration and anger—after all, our firefighters and first responders have endured relentless strain, resource abuse, and diminishing support. But instead, I choose to channel that passion into education and truth. The citizens of Mecklenburg County deserve to know what their fire services are truly up against, and more importantly, what we are asking of you: fairness, accountability, and a commitment to meaningful, long-overdue change.

We are not asking for handouts. We are asking for respect—for our personnel and for the vital work they do. We are asking that the burden placed on fire services to compensate for MEDIC's shortcomings be recognized and addressed. We are asking that the resources our communities depend on be funded in line with today's operational costs, not yesterday's budget math.

Last month, I sent each of you an email detailing a call that disturbs me to this day. In May 2023, during a fatal uptown fire, I responded on the second due engine company. The closest unit—a resource that could have arrived first—was unavailable, tied

up on a low-acuity call, held under MEDIC protocol awaiting transport. When we arrived, conditions were dire, and tragically, we found a deceased individual. I firmly believe that had the closest engine arrived as it should have, the outcome may have been different. This was not an isolated incident—it is one of hundreds, perhaps thousands, that highlight the urgent need for reform.

Despite ongoing complaints and dire warnings from every corner of our fire services, we continue to hear that there's "no increase in funding" for the city and county fire departments and apparatus that routinely step in to fill the void left by MEDIC. And yet, across the county, we see taxpayer-funded MEDIC "posts" stations sitting empty. Who pays for these utilities? Who maintains these unused spaces? Isn't the MEDIC model based on mobile readiness? Why, then, are taxpayers footing the bill for idle infrastructure, while front-line providers go without support?

It doesn't stop there. Over the past three years, our fire services have adopted the First Due software platform to improve data tracking and emergency response efficiency. But collaboration from MEDIC has been consistently absent. Repeated requests for data sharing are met with silence or excuses. What is being hidden? Why won't MEDIC be transparent about information that could save lives?

Earlier this year, a protocol was introduced in the town of Cornelius that allows our police personnel to determine the necessity of ambulance transport on-scene. Yet even now, when asked about performance data, MEDIC claims the results are "still ongoing" or "unavailable." This raises serious questions. Is it just inefficiency, or is it a deliberate effort to obscure the truth?

Let's also talk about non-emergency transports. For months, we've heard MEDIC claim they are stretched too thin—lacking both ambulances and personnel. And yet, non-emergency, for-profit transports continue, siphoning resources away from 911 calls. How can they cry out for support while prioritizing revenue over readiness? You cannot have your cake and eat it too.

So I ask again: Are the citizens and visitors of Mecklenburg County truly receiving the level of service their taxes are paying for? Or are they simply the victims of a broken model, hidden behind polished presentations and misleading reassurances?

I'd be remiss if I didn't join my colleagues in saying what many of us have wanted to say for years: enough is enough. Our members are exhausted, not just from the physical demands of the job, but from the persistent disregard shown by MEDIC leadership and, at times, by those overseeing its operations.

We are not looking for a fight. We are looking for fairness. For accountability. For change. We are looking for a system that prioritizes life over ledger sheets. And we are asking you, as stewards of this county, to stop turning a blind eye.

The current model is failing. It failed yesterday, it is failing today, and it will continue to fail unless action is taken.

We urge you to listen, to engage, and to lead.

Respectfully,

Jordan Hood

Vice President

Charlotte Firefighters Association Local 660