

July 22, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
1705 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
House Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Hoyer, Leader McCarthy, and Chairman Pallone,

The undersigned organizations, a coalition of national organizations committed to connecting Americans in need to mental health and suicide prevention crisis services, urge you to advance S. 2661, the *National Suicide Hotline Designation Act*, in the U.S. House of Representatives as quickly as possible. This critical legislation codifies and supports the implementation of “988” as the three-digit hotline number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and makes mental health crisis services more readily available. **We urge you to bring S. 2661 up for a vote under suspension for standalone passage. This bicameral, bipartisan legislation is urgently needed and, under your leadership, could save lives.**

Following unanimous passage of S. 2661 by the U.S. Senate and the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) vote to designate the 988 number by July 2022, it is crucial that the House of Representatives act to provide the funding guidance, reporting, and specialized service training in the legislation to support the hotline’s implementation. Additionally, on June 24, 2020, all five Federal Communications Commissioners publicly endorsed S. 2661 and its swift passage through the House. **It is critically important that S. 2661 be enacted in a timely manner, as state legislatures – many of whom do not meet annually – must have time to enact the fees to support proper implementation of 988, which the FCC has voted to move forward on a 24 month time-frame.**

The current National Suicide Prevention Lifeline’s network of local call centers answer over 2 million crisis calls a year and call volume is likely to increase after the designation and promotion of the 988 hotline. It is imperative that we move as quickly as possible to address worsening mental health and suicide crises now exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The social, economic, and health consequences of this unprecedented public crisis have exacerbated mental illness and well-recognized suicide risk factors. Having a simple, 3-digit number is essential to meeting America’s mental health needs during and after the crisis, and any further delay in implementation risks the impending launch of the new hotline and potentially lives that could be saved.

We greatly appreciate your leadership during these challenging times and are ready to assist in responding to these major public health threats.

Sincerely,

2020 Mom

American Art Therapy Association
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work
American Association of Suicidology
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Psychological Association
Anxiety and Depression Association of America
Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
Behavioral Health Link
Centerstone
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Children's Hospital Association
Clinical Social Work Association
College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action
Education Development Center
EMDR International Association
Girls Inc.
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
International OCD Foundation
The Jewish Federations of North America
The Kennedy Forum
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance
Mental Health America

National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
National Association for Rural Mental Health
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Board for Certified Counselors
The National Council for Behavioral Health
National Eating Disorders Association
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
The National Register of Health Service Psychologists
Postpartum Support International
Residential Eating Disorders Consortium
RI International
Sandy Hook Promise
SMART Recovery
The Trevor Project
Trust for America's Health
Vibrant Emotional Health
Well Being Trust