

July 22, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
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 Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
1705 Longworth House Office Building
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