

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2488

To amend the Public Health Service Act to expand the capacity of the suicide prevention lifeline and mental health crisis centers.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 27, 2021

Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Ms. ERNST, and Mr. WARNER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to expand the capacity of the suicide prevention lifeline and mental health crisis centers.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Suicide and Crisis Out-
5 reach Prevention Enhancement Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. EXPANDING CAPACITY OF THE SUICIDE PREVEN-**
 2 **TION LIFELINE AND MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS**
 3 **CENTERS.**

4 Section 520E–3 of the Public Health Service Act (42
 5 U.S.C. 290bb–36c) is amended—

6 (1) in subsection (b)—

7 (A) in paragraph (1)—

8 (i) by inserting “supporting and” be-
 9 fore “coordinating”; and

10 (ii) by inserting “mental health” be-
 11 fore “crisis intervention services”;

12 (B) by redesignating paragraphs (2) and
 13 (3) as paragraphs (3) and (4), respectively;

14 (C) by inserting after paragraph (1), the
 15 following:

16 “(2) increasing the capacity of the program and
 17 crisis centers participating in the network to provide
 18 suicide prevention and mental health crisis interven-
 19 tion services to individuals seeking help;”;

20 (D) in paragraph (3), as redesignated by
 21 subparagraph (B), by striking “and” after the
 22 semicolon;

23 (E) in paragraph (4), as redesignated by
 24 subparagraph (B), by striking the period at the
 25 end and inserting a semicolon; and

1 (F) by inserting after paragraph (4), as re-
 2 designated by subparagraph (B), the following:

3 “(5) improving awareness of the program for
 4 suicide prevention and mental health crisis interven-
 5 tion services, including by conducting an awareness
 6 campaign and ongoing outreach to the public; and

7 “(6) establishing, standardizing, and maintain-
 8 ing data collection and reports on racial, ethnic, geo-
 9 graphic, socioeconomic, and other health disparities
 10 to understand disparities in access to the program
 11 and among individuals who are seeking help.”; and

12 (2) in subsection (c), by striking “\$7,198,000
 13 for each of fiscal years 2018 through 2022” and in-
 14 serting “\$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022
 15 through 2026”.

16 **SEC. 3. ENSURING CONNECTIONS AND ACCESS FOR LOW-**
 17 **INCOME USERS.**

18 (a) TRANSMISSION OF CONNECTION.—A tele-
 19 communications carrier (as defined in section 3 of the
 20 Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 153))—

21 (1) shall transmit all calls to 988 and the Na-
 22 tional Suicide Prevention Lifeline to a caller’s local
 23 crisis center; and

1 (2) if a local crisis center transfers such a call
2 to a local emergency, mental health, or social serv-
3 ices resource, shall transmit the call accordingly.

4 (b) PRE-PAID PHONE PLANS.—Calls to 988 and the
5 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline from phones with
6 pre-paid plans shall not count toward used minutes and
7 a telecommunications carrier (as defined in subsection (a))
8 shall not deduct minutes from a caller’s pre-paid phone
9 plan for such purposes.

10 (c) ENFORCEMENT.—A violation of this section shall
11 be treated as a violation of the Communications Act of
12 1934 (47 U.S.C. 151 et seq.). The Federal Communica-
13 tions Commission shall enforce this section in the same
14 manner, by the same means, and with the same jurisdic-
15 tion, powers, and duties as though all applicable terms and
16 provisions of the Communications Act of 1934 were incor-
17 porated into and made a part of this section.

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