

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

September 9, 2021

Ms. Jessica Rosenworcel
Acting Chairwoman
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairwoman Rosenworcel:

As we observe National Suicide Prevention Week, we appreciate the Commission's work implementing the new 988 suicide hotline number. This three-digit crisis line number—which will be operational starting next year—will help millions of Americans access mental health and counseling services from the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline in their time of greatest need. As the Commission considers next steps, we urge you to adopt a text-to-988 option, which will expand the reach of the hotline and make these critical resources more accessible to individuals in crisis.

Last year, Congress unanimously passed the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act to create a short, easy-to-remember three-digit phone number to access the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Even before the pandemic, mental illness rates and suicidal ideation among adults were on the rise. The COVID-19 pandemic compounded these trends and took a particularly devastating toll on the mental health of young people. During the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, suicidal thinking and attempts among youth were up 25% over a similar period in 2019.

As 988 implementation continues, we urge the Commission to require providers to support text messages to 988. As the commission recognized in its April Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, young people and other at-risk populations are often most comfortable communicating via text. By allowing a text-to-988 option in addition to voice call, the Commission can lower the bar to entry and improve access to crisis counseling and mental health services. This will save lives.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Jason Crow
Member of Congress



Ken Buck
Member of Congress



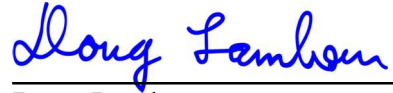
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