

October 9, 2025

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, and Chair Aderholt:

The Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG), a coalition of 100+ national organizations representing people with mental health conditions and substance use disorders, family members, mental health and addiction providers, advocates and other stakeholders, is committed to strengthening Americans' access to mental health and substance use disorder care. We write in strong support of the 988 LGBTQ+ Youth Access Act (S.2826/H.R.5434).

This bipartisan bill would restore and codify the successful specialized services for LGBTQ+ youth within the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline ("988 Lifeline") and ensure that sufficient resources are set aside for this life-saving program. Congress has a critical role in addressing the nation's ongoing mental health crisis. We urge you to support this bipartisan legislation to ensure that at-risk young people will again have access to highly trained counselors when they need it the most.

Suicide is an urgent public health crisis, and far too many Americans still lack timely access to support, treatment, and care. Nearly 50,000 people died by suicide in 2023 - that is one death every 11 minutes. This crisis disproportionately affects veterans, individuals and families in rural communities, and LGBTQ+ youth. Research shows that LGBTQ+ young people are more than four times as likely to attempt suicide as their peers.

The 988 Lifeline, created by Congress with strong bipartisan support and signed into law by President Donald Trump during his first term, was designed to effectively reach all individuals in a mental health, substance use, or suicide crisis. Recognizing that crises affect some populations with greater frequency, Congress and the Trump Administration ensured that the Lifeline would include specialized services to meet the unique needs of at-risk communities. Whether for veterans, LGBTQ+ youth, Spanish-speakers, or individuals who

are deaf or hard of hearing, these specialized services are about providing tailored support to individuals at the highest levels of risk to ensure the best possible outcomes.

The success of these specialized services has been clear. In just two years, the LGBTQ+ youth subnetwork, known as the “Press 3” option, handled [nearly 1.6 million contacts](#), representing more than 9.5% of all contacts to the 988 Lifeline since its launch in 2022. Contacts handled by 988 ‘3’ increased rapidly and steadily. Yet in July, the Administration eliminated the 988 ‘3’ option, cutting off access to this dedicated program staffed by highly trained and culturally competent counselors. At a time of disturbingly high rates of suicide, this decision was deeply troubling.

The 988 LGBTQ+ Youth Access Act provides an opportunity to reaffirm Congress’s intent when it first established the Lifeline: to save lives by ensuring specialized support for those known to be at highest risk. Re-establishing and adequately funding the 988 ‘3’ option is a meaningful step toward preventing harm to young Americans and restoring trust in this essential public health resource.

In summary, the 988 Lifeline, including its specialized services, represents the best of government action: officials recognized a critical need, worked across party lines, and created a program that has saved countless lives. As the ongoing national mental health crisis continues to devastate families and communities, it is essential that Congress act with urgency to protect and strengthen this program. Restoring 988 ‘3’ services puts people ahead of politics. We respectfully urge you to join colleagues on both sides of the aisle in supporting this crucial bipartisan legislation.

Sincerely,

Active Minds

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work

American Counseling Association

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Psychiatric Association

American Psychiatric Nurses Association

American Psychological Association Services

Anxiety & Depression Association of America

Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Crisis Text Line

Community Catalyst

Epilepsy Foundation of America

Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice

Inseparable

International OCD Foundation

International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses
Legal Action Center
Mental Health America
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
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Psychotherapy Action Network (PsiAN)
REDC Consortium
Sandy Hook Promise
School Social Work Association of America
The American Association of Childhood and Adolescent Psychiatry
The Kennedy Forum
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
The Trevor Project
Western Youth Services

October 9, 2025

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chair
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Morgan Griffith
Chair
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Energy and Commerce,
Subcommittee on Health
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Diana DeGette
Ranking Member
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Energy and Commerce,
Subcommittee on Health
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Guthrie, Ranking Member Pallone, Chair Griffith, and Ranking Member DeGette:

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Western Youth Services

October 9, 2025

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
United States Senate
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
United States Senate
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair
United States Senate
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member
United States Senate
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Collins, Ranking Member Murray, Chair Capito, and Ranking Member Baldwin:

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Western Youth Services

October 9, 2025

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
Chair
United States Senate
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and
Pensions
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Ranking Member
United States Senate
Committee on Health, Education, Labor
and Pensions
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Cassidy and Ranking Member Sanders:

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