

116TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. 2661

AN ACT

To amend the Communications Act of 1934 to designate 9–8–8 as the universal telephone number for the purpose of the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system operating through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and through the Veterans Crisis Line, and for other purposes.

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 “National Suicide Hot-
5 line Designation Act of 2020”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) According to the American Foundation for
9 Suicide Prevention, on average, there are 129 sui-
10 cides per day in the United States.

11 (2) To prevent future suicides, it is critical to
12 transition the cumbersome, existing 10-digit Na-
13 tional Suicide Hotline to a universal, easy-to-remem-
14 ber, 3-digit phone number and connect people in cri-
15 sis with life-saving resources.

16 (3) It is essential that people in the United
17 States have access to a 3-digit national suicide hot-
18 line across all geographic locations.

19 (4) The designated suicide hotline number will
20 need to be both familiar and recognizable to all peo-
21 ple in the United States.

1 **SEC. 3. UNIVERSAL TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR NATIONAL**
2 **SUICIDE PREVENTION AND MENTAL HEALTH**
3 **CRISIS HOTLINE SYSTEM.**

4 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 251(e) of the Commu-
5 nications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 251(e)) is amended by
6 adding at the end the following:

7 “(4) **UNIVERSAL TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR NA-**
8 **TIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION AND MENTAL HEALTH**
9 **CRISIS HOTLINE SYSTEM.**—9–8–8 is designated as
10 the universal telephone number within the United
11 States for the purpose of the national suicide pre-
12 vention and mental health crisis hotline system oper-
13 ating through the National Suicide Prevention Life-
14 line maintained by the Assistant Secretary for Men-
15 tal Health and Substance Use under section 520E–
16 3 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C.
17 290bb–36c) and through the Veterans Crisis Line
18 maintained by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
19 under section 1720F(h) of title 38, United States
20 Code.”.

21 (b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendment made by
22 subsection (a) shall take effect on the date that is 1 year
23 after the date of enactment of this Act.

24 (c) **REQUIRED REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days
25 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Assistant Sec-
26 retary for Mental Health and Substance Use and the Sec-

1 retary of Veterans Affairs shall jointly submit a report
2 that details the resources necessary to make the use of
3 9–8–8, as designated under paragraph (4) of section
4 251(e) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C.
5 251(e)), as added by subsection (a) of this section, oper-
6 ational and effective across the United States to—

7 (1) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and
8 Transportation of the Senate;

9 (2) the Committee on Appropriations of the
10 Senate;

11 (3) the Committee on Energy and Commerce of
12 the House of Representatives; and

13 (4) the Committee on Appropriations of the
14 House of Representatives.

15 **SEC. 4. STATE AUTHORITY OVER FEES.**

16 (a) **AUTHORITY.**—

17 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—Nothing in this Act, any
18 amendment made by this Act, the Communications
19 Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 151 et seq.), or any Com-
20 mission regulation or order may prevent the imposi-
21 tion and collection of a fee or charge applicable to
22 a commercial mobile service or an IP-enabled voice
23 service specifically designated by a State, a political
24 subdivision of a State, an Indian Tribe, or village or
25 regional corporation serving a region established

1 pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement
2 Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.) for 9–8–8 related serv-
3 ices, if the fee or charge is held in a sequestered ac-
4 count to be obligated or expended only in support of
5 9–8–8 services, or enhancements of such services, as
6 specified in the provision of State or local law adopt-
7 ing the fee or charge.

8 (2) USE OF 9–8–8 FUNDS.—A fee or charge col-
9 lected under this subsection shall only be imposed,
10 collected, and used to pay expenses that a State, a
11 political subdivision of a State, an Indian Tribe, or
12 village or regional corporation serving a region es-
13 tablished pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Set-
14 tlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.) is expected to
15 incur that are reasonably attributed to—

16 (A) ensuring the efficient and effective
17 routing of calls made to the 9–8–8 national sui-
18 cide prevention and mental health crisis hotline
19 to an appropriate crisis center; and

20 (B) personnel and the provision of acute
21 mental health, crisis outreach and stabilization
22 services by directly responding to the 9–8–8 na-
23 tional suicide prevention and mental health cri-
24 sis hotline.

1 (b) FEE ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT.—To ensure effi-
2 ciency, transparency, and accountability in the collection
3 and expenditure of a fee or charge for the support or im-
4 plementation of 9–8–8 services, not later than 2 years
5 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually
6 thereafter, the Commission shall submit to the Commit-
7 tees on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and Ap-
8 propriations of the Senate and the Committees on Energy
9 and Commerce and Appropriations of the House of Rep-
10 resentatives a report that—

11 (1) details the status in each State, political
12 subdivision of a State, Indian Tribe, or village or re-
13 gional corporation serving a region established pur-
14 suant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act
15 (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.) of the collection and dis-
16 tribution of such fees or charges; and

17 (2) includes findings on the amount of revenues
18 obligated or expended by each State, political sub-
19 division of a State, Indian Tribe, or village or re-
20 gional corporation serving a region established pur-
21 suant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act
22 (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.) for any purpose other than
23 the purpose for which any such fees or charges are
24 specified.

25 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1 (1) COMMERCIAL MOBILE SERVICE.—The term
2 “commercial mobile service” has the meaning given
3 that term under section 332(d) of the Communica-
4 tions Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 332(d)).

5 (2) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission”
6 means the Federal Communications Commission.

7 (3) IP-ENABLED VOICE SERVICE.—The term
8 “IP-enabled voice service” shall include—

9 (A) an interconnected VoIP service, as de-
10 fined in section 9.3 of the title 47 of the Code
11 of Federal Regulations, or any successor there-
12 to; and

13 (B) a one-way interconnected VoIP service.

14 (4) STATE.—The term “State” has the mean-
15 ing given that term in section 7 of the Wireless
16 Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999 (47
17 U.S.C. 615b).

18 **SEC. 5. LOCATION IDENTIFICATION REPORT.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
20 date of the enactment of this Act, the Federal Commu-
21 nications Commission shall submit to the appropriate com-
22 mittees a report that examines the feasibility and cost of
23 including an automatic dispatchable location that would
24 be conveyed with a 9–8–8 call, regardless of the techno-
25 logical platform used and including with calls from multi-

1 line telephone systems (as defined in section 6502 of the
2 Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012
3 (47 U.S.C. 1471)).

4 (b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

5 (1) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES.—The term
6 “appropriate committees” means the following:

7 (A) The Committee on Commerce, Science,
8 and Transportation of the Senate.

9 (B) The Committee on Health, Education,
10 Labor, and Pensions of the Senate.

11 (C) The Committee on Energy and Com-
12 merce of the House of Representatives.

13 (2) DISPATCHABLE LOCATION.—The term
14 “dispatchable location” means the street address of
15 the calling party and additional information such as
16 room number, floor number, or similar information
17 necessary to adequately identify the location of the
18 calling party.

19 **SEC. 6. REPORT ON CERTAIN TRAINING PROGRAMS.**

20 (a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
21 gress that—

22 (1) youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual,
23 transgender, or queer (referred to in this section as
24 “LGBTQ”) are more than 4 times more likely to
25 contemplate suicide than their peers, with 1 in 5

1 LGBTQ youth and more than 1 in 3 transgender
2 youth reporting attempting suicide;

3 (2) American Indian and Alaska Natives have
4 the highest rate of suicide of any racial or ethnic
5 group in the United States with a suicide rate over
6 3.5 times higher than the racial or ethnic group with
7 the lowest rate, with the suicide rate increasing,
8 since 1999, by 139 percent for American Indian
9 women and 71 percent for men;

10 (3) between 2001 and 2015, the suicide death
11 rate in rural counties in the United States was
12 17.32 per 100,000 individuals, which is significantly
13 greater than the national average, and the data
14 shows that between that same time period, suicide
15 rates increased for all age groups across all counties
16 in the United States, with the highest rates and the
17 greatest increases being in more rural counties; and

18 (4) the Substance Abuse and Mental Health
19 Services Administration must be equipped to provide
20 specialized resources to these and other high-risk
21 populations.

22 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date
23 of enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary for Men-
24 tal Health and Substance Use shall submit to the Com-
25 mittee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the

1 Senate, the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and
2 Pensions of the Senate, and the Committee on Energy and
3 Commerce of the House of Representatives a report
4 that—

5 (1) details a strategy, to be developed in con-
6 sultation with the Centers for Disease Control and
7 Prevention, the National Institute of Mental Health,
8 and organizations capable of providing nationwide
9 suicide prevention and crisis services for LGBTQ
10 youth, minorities, rural individuals, or other high-
11 risk populations, for the Substance Abuse and Men-
12 tal Health Services Administration to offer, support,
13 or provide technical assistance to training programs
14 for National Suicide Prevention Lifeline counselors
15 to increase competency in serving high-risk popu-
16 lations; and

17 (2) includes recommendations regarding—

18 (A) the facilitation of access to services
19 that are provided to specially trained staff and
20 partner organizations for LGBTQ youth, mi-
21 norities, rural individuals, and other high-risk
22 populations; and

23 (B) a strategy for optimally implementing
24 an Integrated Voice Response, or other equally
25 effective mechanism, to allow National Suicide

1 Prevention Lifeline callers who are LGBTQ
2 youth, minorities, rural individuals, or members
3 of other high-risk populations to access special-
4 ized services.

Passed the Senate May 13, 2020.

Attest:

Secretary.

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To amend the Communications Act of 1934 to designate 9-8-8 as the universal telephone number for the purpose of the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system operating through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and through the Veterans Crisis Line, and for other purposes.