

116<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# **S. 2661**

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## **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.