



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE
CHAIRWOMAN

January 4, 2022

The Honorable Jason Crow
U.S. House of Representatives
1229 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Crow:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's ongoing efforts to implement 988 as the three-digit code to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which will assist millions of people across the country seeking access to essential mental health and counseling services. I share your commitment to facilitating access to 988, which is why the agency recently required providers to permit texting 988 to reach the Lifeline.

As you note, suicide is on the rise, and the COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly contributed to broader issues with mental health, especially for at-risk populations. As we know from 911, creating an easy-to-remember three-digit number makes it significantly easier for people to get help when they need it most.

When I took over at the agency, it was already on course to make 988 available nationwide on July 16, 2022, but only for traditional voice calls. However, I believe that it is important we do everything we can to increase access to this life-saving service. That is why I am pleased to report that on November 18, 2021, the Commission unanimously adopted a measure to make available texting to 988 by the same effective date—July 16, 2022. The Commission's action requires covered text providers to support text messaging to 988 by routing text messages sent to 988 to the Lifeline's 10-digit number, 1-800-273-8255 (TALK).

We need to make sure that everyone in this country who needs mental health counseling can reach that help as easily as possible. To do that, we need to meet people where they are. Increasingly, that's texting on their phones. We know that millions of us, but especially young people and those with disabilities, are more likely to text than call when they are in crisis. Put simply, if texting is how you are most comfortable communicating with others, enabling text-to-988 will make it more likely that you reach out for help when you are in distress. The bottom line is it shouldn't matter if you make a voice call or send a text message, because we should connect people in crisis to the resources they need, no matter how they communicate.

It is also important to note the critical role of the Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Department of Veterans Affairs in this effort. They oversee the Lifeline and the Veterans Crisis Line, both of

which are available 24 hours a day, every day of the year. During the transition to 988, we urge those seeking immediate help to call the Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 (TALK) or reach the Lifeline's online chat at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>. Service members, Veterans, and their families may reach the Veterans Crisis Line by calling 1-800-273-8255 and pressing 1, by texting 838255, or through chat at the Veterans Crisis Line's website, www.veteranscrisisline.net. I am grateful to these agencies for their feedback and support and look forward to continuing to work with our federal partners to make the transition to 988 a success.

I appreciate your support for a text-to-988 option to make life-saving resources more widely available. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

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Jessica Rosenworcel



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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OFFICE OF THE
CHAIRWOMAN

January 4, 2022

The Honorable Ken Buck
U.S. House of Representatives
2455 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Buck:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's ongoing efforts to implement 988 as the three-digit code to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which will assist millions of people across the country seeking access to essential mental health and counseling services. I share your commitment to facilitating access to 988, which is why the agency recently required providers to permit texting 988 to reach the Lifeline.

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January 4, 2022

The Honorable Diana DeGette
U.S. House of Representatives
2111 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman DeGette:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's ongoing efforts to implement 988 as the three-digit code to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which will assist millions of people across the country seeking access to essential mental health and counseling services. I share your commitment to facilitating access to 988, which is why the agency recently required providers to permit texting 988 to reach the Lifeline.

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January 4, 2022

The Honorable Jose Neguse
U.S. House of Representatives
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Neguse:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's ongoing efforts to implement 988 as the three-digit code to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which will assist millions of people across the country seeking access to essential mental health and counseling services. I share your commitment to facilitating access to 988, which is why the agency recently required providers to permit texting 988 to reach the Lifeline.

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January 4, 2022

The Honorable Lauren Boebert
U.S. House of Representatives
1609 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Boebert:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's ongoing efforts to implement 988 as the three-digit code to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which will assist millions of people across the country seeking access to essential mental health and counseling services. I share your commitment to facilitating access to 988, which is why the agency recently required providers to permit texting 988 to reach the Lifeline.

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January 4, 2022

The Honorable Doug Lamborn
U.S. House of Representatives
2371 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Lamborn:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's ongoing efforts to implement 988 as the three-digit code to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which will assist millions of people across the country seeking access to essential mental health and counseling services. I share your commitment to facilitating access to 988, which is why the agency recently required providers to permit texting 988 to reach the Lifeline.

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January 4, 2022

The Honorable Ed Perlmutter
U.S. House of Representatives
1226 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Perlmutter:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's ongoing efforts to implement 988 as the three-digit code to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which will assist millions of people across the country seeking access to essential mental health and counseling services. I share your commitment to facilitating access to 988, which is why the agency recently required providers to permit texting 988 to reach the Lifeline.

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