

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2661

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.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 22, 2019

Mr. GARDNER (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MORAN, and Mr. REED) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

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 2019”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

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

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

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

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

17 **SEC. 3. UNIVERSAL TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR NATIONAL**
18 **SUICIDE PREVENTION AND MENTAL HEALTH**
19 **CRISIS HOTLINE SYSTEM.**

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

23 “(4) UNIVERSAL TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR NA-
24 TIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION AND MENTAL HEALTH
25 CRISIS HOTLINE SYSTEM.—9–8–8 is designated as
26 the universal telephone number within the United

1 States for the purpose of the national suicide pre-
2 vention and mental health crisis hotline system oper-
3 ating through the National Suicide Prevention Life-
4 line maintained by the Assistant Secretary for Men-
5 tal Health and Substance Use under section 520E-
6 3 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C.
7 290bb-36c) and through the Veterans Crisis Line
8 maintained by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
9 under section 1720F(h) of title 38, United States
10 Code.”.

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

14 (c) REQUIRED REPORT.—Not later than 180 days
15 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Assistant Sec-
16 retary for Mental Health and Substance Use and the Sec-
17 retary of Veterans Affairs shall jointly submit a report
18 that details the resources necessary to make the use of
19 9-8-8, as designated under paragraph (4) of section
20 251(e) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C.
21 251(e)), as added by subsection (a) of this section, oper-
22 ational and effective across the United States to—

23 (1) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and
24 Transportation of the Senate;

1 (2) the Committee on Appropriations of the
2 Senate;

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

5 (4) the Committee on Appropriations of the
6 House of Representatives.

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

8 (a) AUTHORITY.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this Act, any
10 amendment made by this Act, the Communications
11 Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 151 et seq.), or any Com-
12 mission regulation or order may prevent the imposi-
13 tion and collection of a fee or charge applicable to
14 a commercial mobile service or an IP-enabled voice
15 service specifically designated by a State, a political
16 subdivision of a State, an Indian Tribe, or village or
17 regional corporation serving a region established
18 pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement
19 Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.) for the support or im-
20 plementation of 9–8–8 services, if the fee or charge
21 is held in a sequestered account to be obligated or
22 expended only in support of 9–8–8 services, or en-
23 hancements of such services, as specified in the pro-
24 vision of State or local law adopting the fee or
25 charge.

1 (2) LIMIT ON FEE OR CHARGE.—For each class
2 of subscribers to IP-enabled voice services, the fee or
3 charge may not exceed the amount of any such fee
4 or charge applicable to the same class of subscribers
5 to telecommunications services.

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

16 (1) details the status in each State of the collec-
17 tion and distribution of such fees or charges; and

18 (2) includes findings on the amount of revenues
19 obligated or expended by each State or political sub-
20 division thereof for any purpose other than the pur-
21 pose for which any such fees or charges are speci-
22 fied.

23 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

24 (1) COMMERCIAL MOBILE SERVICE.—The term
25 “commercial mobile service” has the meaning given

1 that term under section 332(d) of the Communica-
2 tions Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 332(d)).

3 (2) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission”
4 means the Federal Communications Commission.

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

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

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

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

16 (5) TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICE.—The
17 term “telecommunications service” has the meaning
18 given that term in section 3 of the Communications
19 Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 153).

20 **SEC. 5. LOCATION IDENTIFICATION REPORT.**

21 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
22 date of the enactment of this Act, the Federal Commu-
23 nications Commission shall submit to the appropriate com-
24 mittees a report that examines the feasibility and cost of
25 including an automatic dispatchable location that would

1 be conveyed with a 9–8–8 call, regardless of the techno-
2 logical platform used and including with calls from multi-
3 line telephone systems (as defined in section 6502 of the
4 Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012
5 (47 U.S.C. 1471)).

6 (b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

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

9 (A) The Committee on Commerce, Science,
10 and Transportation of the Senate.

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

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

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

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