

June 24, 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

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
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

The Honorable Julia Letlow
Vice 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 Collins, Vice Chair Murray, Chair Capito, Ranking Member Baldwin, Chair Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Aderholt, and Vice Chair Letlow:

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 want to share our deep concerns regarding [the Administration's order](#) to eliminate LGBTQ+ youth specialized services within the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline ("988 Lifeline") by July 17, 2025.

Suicide is an urgent public health issue, and far too many Americans lack access to lifesaving support, treatment, and care. As you know, almost 50,000 people died by suicide in 2023 – that is one death every 11 minutes. This crisis has even more acute impacts on veterans, individuals and families in rural America, and LGBTQ+ youth. In fact, research shows that LGBTQ+ young people are more than four times as likely to attempt suicide than their peers.

The 988 Lifeline was established by Congress and signed into law by President Donald Trump during his first term to effectively reach and serve all persons in a mental health, substance use, or suicide crisis. Recognizing the disproportionate impacts of these crises on particular communities, Congress and the first Trump Administration ensured that the 988 Lifeline included services that could provide unique care to at-risk populations. The core of specialized services is about addressing acute risk levels and providing effective crisis services to Americans who need them the most.

MHLG appreciates the remarkably strong bipartisan approach that has gone into building and funding the 988 Lifeline. Working together, Congress and mental health organizations have helped build a network of services that saves lives every day. Since the 988 Lifeline became available nationwide in July 2022, more than 14 million Americans in need have been served.

As the Administration highlighted in its FY26 budget request, the volume of contacts to the 988 Lifeline is expected to continue to grow – to as many as nine million contacts in the next fiscal year. Increased funding will be necessary to ensure that the 988 Lifeline has the capacity to support those in need.

Further, we want to reaffirm the Administration’s recognition of the importance of a comprehensive approach to crisis care and the 988 Lifeline’s crucial role in strengthening and transforming our country’s behavioral health system. Part of what makes the 988 Lifeline effective at saving lives - as the Administration has pointed out - is a structure that is designed to ensure that culturally competent crisis services can be directed to those most in need of help. We support the effort by the Administration to maintain services offered through the Veterans Crisis Line for veterans, another at-risk group alongside LGBTQ+ youth.

Data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services shows that about 9% of the millions of people who contacted the 988 Lifeline have reached out to the LGBTQ+ youth subnetwork – which comes to about 1.3 million contacts. The LGBTQ+ youth subnetwork – made up of seven crisis centers across the U.S. – is built on both expertise and data, and its highly trained counselors provide timely and competent care to young people when they need it the most. It is best practice to tailor services to the unique needs of those at greatest risk for suicide – and that is exactly why these specialized services are so effective at saving young American lives.

With our country facing record-high suicide and suicide attempt rates, including among youth, it is more important than ever that we continue to bolster services and practices that ensure people calling the 988 Lifeline receive the support they need and deserve. We urge you and the Administration to continue funding and operating the life-saving specialized services for LGBTQ+ youth within the 988 Lifeline.

We welcome the opportunity to work with you to address the profound mental health and substance use challenges faced by Americans.

Sincerely,

Active Minds

American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy

American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Mental Health Counselors Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Psychological Association Services
Anxiety and Depression Association of America
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Community Catalyst
Crisis Text Line
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 for Rural Mental Health
National Association of County Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Directors
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Social Workers
National Board for Certified Counselors & Affiliates
National League of Nursing
REDC Consortium
School Social Work Association of America

The American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

The Jed Foundation

The Kennedy Forum

The Trevor Project

Youth Villages

CC: The Honorable Bill Cassidy
The Honorable Bernard Sanders