

Chair Headland and Committee Members,

My name is Theresa Deckert and I am from Devils Lake. I serve on the board of our county's Suicide Prevention Coalition, lead a Suicide Loss support group and co-chair the Lake Region Out of the Darkness Walk. Our small community of Devils Lake and surrounding areas has raised over \$70,000 for suicide prevention and awareness in the last 5 years that we have been a walk site. Our community has been greatly impacted by suicide. The funds raised show this is an area that our community cares about.

I got involved with suicide prevention after losing my younger brother to suicide in 2014. My life was changed at that instant. It is urgent that we provide ways for people who are having suicidal ideations or a mental health crisis to be able to get the help they need!

Before the implementation of the 988 number, people had to remember to call 1-800-273-TALK. You might remember the TALK part and the 800, but what about the 273. Having a 3 digit crisis number will be revolutionary in preventing suicide. If there had been a 3 digit number when my brother was in crisis, he might still be here.

This program was implemented by the federal government after years of effort from a number of organizations. To maintain the manning of this phone line with individuals trained in suicide prevention and crisis evaluation, it needs the necessary funding. I believe adding this 30 cent a month fee to a phone bill is the logical way to fund this needed service. It is the same way that 911 is funded and I don't think anyone who has ever had to call that number is upset they had to pay a fee on their phone bill to fund it.

Please help save lives by voting for a "do pass" on SB 2149

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