

1/13/2022

Relating to the creation of the 988 crisis hotline program and the 988 crisis stabilization fund and the imposition of a 988 access fee.

Dear Chairman Senator Lee and Members of the Human Services Committee.

On behalf of FirstLink, I would like to thank you for your continued unwavering support and commitment to serving people in crisis, including individuals in our state who will contact the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (988 Lifeline). My name is Faye Seidler. I humbly ask for your support of SB 2149.

I'm a suicide prevention advocate who works with organizations across North Dakota in the sectors of healthcare, social work, and education. When we consider SB 2149, I'd like us to think about the data we have on suicide coming from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey:

- 1 in 5 high school youth have seriously considering suicide during the last year.
- 1 in 4 middle school youth had at some point in their life seriously thought about suicide.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for individuals under the age of forty in North Dakota. This is why having a 24/7 988 suicide and crisis phone number to call is important to me. These kids and young adults need a place they can turn to, they need hope, and a reliable service to get help. Suicide impacts entire communities and any time we can prevent even one, we save so many people from grief and despair.

Thank you again for your commitment to serving individuals experiencing a mental health emergency. Please feel free to contact me at the email below if you have any questions or to discuss ensuring individuals in our great state of North Dakota have access to robust and well-resourced crisis intervention services.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

Faye Seidler

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