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Monday – Friday, 8am – 5pm

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**Dear Chairman Klemin and Members of the Judiciary Committee,**

My name is Jennifer Illich, and I am the Executive Director at FirstLink. I am writing to express my strong support for SB 2145, which provides immunity to employees of the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline, the 211 information and referral helpline, and the 911 system.

988 and 211 are essential mental health resources that provide life-saving support to individuals in crisis. However, without liability coverage, these critical services remain vulnerable to legal and financial risks that could hinder their effectiveness and availability.

Call specialists working within the 988 and 211 systems are often faced with high-stakes decision-making under immense pressure. If adverse outcomes occur, lawsuits could arise, placing financial strain on helplines, their operators, and the broader mental health support system. Liability protections would serve as a necessary safeguard, ensuring that legal challenges do not threaten the existence or efficiency of these crucial services.

Furthermore, providing liability protection would reinforce public trust in the 988 and 211 systems. Call specialists would have the security needed to provide compassionate, professional, and thorough assistance without fear of personal or institutional repercussions. This assurance would also help attract and retain skilled professionals, strengthening the crisis intervention network.

Ensuring legal protections for 988 and 211 employees aligns with best practices seen in other essential public services, such as emergency medical response and law enforcement. Just as these professionals receive legal protections while carrying out their duties, 988 responders should have similar safeguards to continue their critical work without undue legal vulnerabilities.

Protecting those who provide life-saving care is both a moral obligation and a practical necessity. Liability protections for 988 and 211 services would safeguard these essential helplines, their operators, and, most importantly, the individuals who rely on them during their most vulnerable moments.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and look forward to your response.

**Sincerely,**  
Jennifer Illich

Executive Director, FirstLink



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