

Dear Chairman Barta, Vice Chairman Boehm and the Members of the Industry and Business Committee,

Growing up on a farm North Dakota, I know firsthand the struggles many in our community face. Stress, isolation, and financial uncertainty take a heavy toll on mental health. That's why I'm writing to strongly support SB 2200, which will ensure continued and increased funding for the 988 Suicide and Crisis Helpline. This funding is vital to keeping wait times down and providing free, lifesaving support to those in crisis.

The demand for 988 services is growing rapidly. FirstLink, which operates the helpline, reports thousands of calls, texts, and chats, with interactions often lasting 20–35 minutes due to the complexity of the issues people face. For farmers and others in rural areas, where mental health resources can be scarce, quick and reliable access to 988 is essential. Without adequate funding, delays in response times could mean the difference between life and death.

Supporting SB 2200 is an investment in the health and well-being of all North Dakotans, including our hardworking farmers. Please help ensure this crucial resource has the funding it needs to meet growing demands and provide timely, effective support to everyone who needs it. Thank you for considering this important bill.

Sincerely,  
Alyssa Kahler  
North Dakota Farmer