

Subject: Support SB 2200 – Strengthening the 988 Crisis Hotline Program

Dear Members of the Industry and Business Committee,

My name is Tamara, and as a passionate advocate for mental health, I'm writing to express my strong support for SB 2200. Mental health challenges impact people of all ages and backgrounds in North Dakota, and having accessible, reliable resources like the 988 crisis hotline is absolutely essential to saving lives and fostering community well-being.

The 988 hotline has already proven to be a transformative resource, offering free, confidential, and compassionate support to individuals in crisis. It has reduced barriers to seeking help, providing a crucial safety net for people who may not have access to other mental health services.

However, the demand for 988 services is growing, and it's imperative that we act now to expand the program's capacity. By securing adequate and consistent funding, we can ensure:

- The hiring of additional full-time employees to handle increasing call volumes.
- Infrastructure improvements to provide timely and effective responses to all North Dakotans, including those in rural and underserved areas.

Without this support, we risk leaving individuals in crisis without the help they need, potentially leading to tragic outcomes. As a mental health advocate, I see the difference these services make every day. Supporting SB 2200 is more than a policy decision—it's a commitment to saving lives and creating a healthier, more resilient North Dakota.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering this critical legislation. I urge you to vote in favor of SB 2200 and help ensure that everyone in our state has access to the support they need during their most vulnerable moments.

Sincerely,
Tamara Kelly
Mental Health Advocate