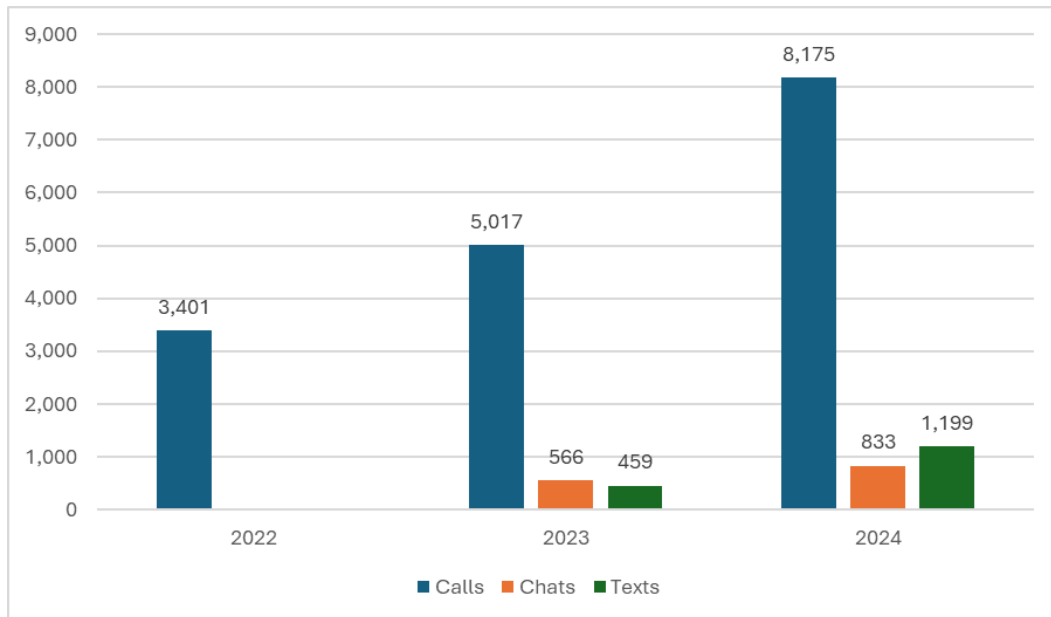


Dear Chairman Barta and Members of the Industry and Business Committee,

**I strongly urge your support for SB 2200 to ensure the continued and increased funding of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.**

This essential service provides free, confidential, and lifesaving support to North Dakotans. These services are proven to be effective, as FirstLink handled 10,207 calls, chats, and texts on the 988 Lifeline in 2024 and only requested assistance from local emergency dispatch 118 times, of which 58 of those connections to dispatch were voluntary/at request of the help-seeker. **The need for compassionate support to North Dakotans reaching the 988 Lifeline is evident in the increasing volume of calls, chats, and texts each year (see chart below.)**



By supporting SB 2200, you are making a commitment to saving lives and strengthening our communities. Your leadership is vital in ensuring that no one in crisis feels alone and that help is always available.

Thank you for your consideration and for your dedication to the well-being of North Dakotans.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Brown