

Subject: Strong Support for SB2200

My name is Elizabeth Medd. I'm a mother of two, wife, architect and youth mental health advocate.

I am submitting this testimony in favor of the 988 suicide prevention and crisis lifeline number as listed in Senate Bill 2200. This country, and specifically the state of North Dakota, is experiencing a mental health crisis of epidemic proportions. Support is necessary from early prevention education through crisis support, the latter of which is currently provided by the 988 lifeline number.

This is personally important to me as our family has endured the devastating loss of a loved one to suicide. On February 1, 2021, my fifteen-year-old son took his own life. While there was a 1800 number in existence at the time, it is our belief that keeping a more accessible number and resource, found in the 988 support system, is necessary to save lives. The 988 crisis line is easy to recognize, memorize and access from any device and this allows it to be more effective for someone experiencing a crisis.

As part of being a youth mental health advocate, I have completed many of the trainings necessary for the lifeline workers and can attest to the empathy, compassion and caring provided by those answering calls and the effectiveness of having such individuals available through the 988 number.

In keeping such a resource and providing funding and legislation for it for years to come, will put North Dakota in the right position in the fight to end the epidemic of suicide in our state by allotting for the necessary and valuable resource that is the 988 suicide prevention and crisis lifeline number.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,

Elizabeth Medd

Suicide Loss Survivor