

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8620

To amend the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 to establish a hotline for caregivers of individuals with developmental disabilities, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 30, 2026

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Ms. NORTON, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. CORREA, and Ms. LOFGREN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To amend the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 to establish a hotline for caregivers of individuals with developmental disabilities, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Caregiver Access to
5 Resources and Emotional Support Hotline Act” or the
6 “CARES Hotline Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL HOTLINE FOR CAREGIVERS OF INDIVID-**
2 **UALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Developmental Disabilities
4 Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C.
5 15001 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
6 lowing:

7 **“TITLE V—CAREGIVER SUPPORT**

8 **“SEC. 501. NATIONAL HOTLINE FOR CAREGIVERS OF INDIV-**
9 **VIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABIL-**
10 **ITIES.**

11 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall maintain, di-
12 rectly or by awarding a grant or entering into a contract
13 with an eligible entity, a national hotline to provide emo-
14 tional support, information, brief intervention, and mental
15 health and resources to caregivers of individuals with de-
16 velopmental disabilities.

17 “(b) REQUIREMENTS FOR HOTLINE.—The hotline
18 under subsection (a) shall—

19 “(1) be toll-free;

20 “(2) be a 24/7 real-time hotline;

21 “(3) provide voice and text support;

22 “(4) be staffed by trained personnel who receive
23 standardized training in caregiver support, crisis re-
24 sponse, and culturally and linguistically appropriate
25 services;

1 “(5) include peer-to-peer staff who will work
2 alongside the professionals specified in paragraph
3 (4);

4 “(6) provide referral services to local, State,
5 and Federal resources, including crisis support,
6 adult services, transition programs, and in-home
7 supports to meet the needs of caregivers, including
8 family and household members, of individuals with
9 developmental disabilities.

10 “(c) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—In maintaining
11 the hotline under subsection (a), the Secretary (or eligible
12 entity) shall—

13 “(1) consult with the Recognize, Assist, In-
14 clude, Support, & Engage (RAISE) Family Care-
15 givers Act Advisory Council to ensure that caregivers
16 of individuals with developmental disabilities are
17 connected in real-time to the appropriate specialized
18 hotline service;

19 “(2) develop, maintain, and regularly update a
20 national database of services, supports, and re-
21 sources for caregivers of individuals with develop-
22 mental disabilities.

23 “(d) TRAINING PROGRAM.—An eligible entity that re-
24 ceives a grant or enters into a contract to maintain the
25 hotline under this section shall design, implement, and

1 maintain training programs for the personnel described in
2 subsection (b)(4).

3 “(e) PRIORITY.—In making a grant or entering into
4 a contract under this section, the Secretary shall give pri-
5 ority to entities that have in effect a partnership with a
6 community-based organization.

7 “(f) PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN.—The Secretary
8 (or eligible entity) shall conduct national outreach and
9 public awareness activities to raise awareness of the hot-
10 line through—

11 “(1) maintaining a public-facing website; and

12 “(2) developing and distributing educational
13 and promotional materials.

14 “(g) REPORT.—Beginning not later than 1 year after
15 the date of the enactment of this section, and annually
16 thereafter, the Secretary shall submit a report to Congress
17 on the hotline under subsection (a) and implementation
18 of this section, including—

19 “(1) an evaluation of the effectiveness of activi-
20 ties conducted or supported under subsection (a);
21 and

22 “(2) a directory of entities or organizations to
23 which staff maintaining the hotline funded under
24 this section may make referrals.

1 “(h) ELIGIBLE ENTITY DEFINED.—In this section,
 2 the term ‘eligible entity’ means a nonprofit organization
 3 that has—

4 “(1) demonstrated national reach or capacity to
 5 serve all States and territories; and

6 “(2) experience navigating State-by-State serv-
 7 ice systems.

8 “(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To
 9 carry out this section, there are authorized to be appro-
 10 priated \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2027 through
 11 2032.”.

12 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS CONFORMING AMEND-
 13 MENT.—The table of contents for such Act is amended
 14 by adding at the end the following:

“TITLE V—CAREGIVER SUPPORT

“Sec. 501. National Hotline for Caregivers of Individuals with Developmental
 Disabilities.”.

