

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4640

To amend the Public Health Service Act to award grants to eligible crisis centers to provide follow-up services to individuals receiving suicide prevention and crisis intervention services, to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to improve the accessibility of 9–8–8, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 21, 2026

Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. KING, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to award grants to eligible crisis centers to provide follow-up services to individuals receiving suicide prevention and crisis intervention services, to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to improve the accessibility of 9–8–8, 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 “9–8–8 Connect Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. GRANTS FOR FOLLOW-UP SERVICES TO INDIVID-**
 2 **UALS RECEIVING SUICIDE PREVENTION AND**
 3 **CRISIS INTERVENTION SERVICES.**

4 Title V of the Public Health Service Act is amended
 5 by inserting after section 520E-4 (42 U.S.C. 290bb-36d)
 6 the following:

7 **“SEC. 520E-5. FOLLOW-UP SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS RE-**
 8 **CEIVING SUICIDE PREVENTION AND CRISIS**
 9 **INTERVENTION SERVICES.**

10 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through
 11 the Assistant Secretary, shall award grants to eligible cri-
 12 sis centers to provide follow-up services to individuals re-
 13 ceiving suicide prevention and crisis intervention services.

14 “(b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to seek a grant
 15 under this section, a crisis center shall be a member of
 16 the network of crisis centers coordinated under section
 17 520E-3(b)(1).

18 “(c) SELECTION.—The Secretary shall select recipi-
 19 ents of grants under this section based on the relative
 20 needs, including capacity and service gaps, of the eligible
 21 crisis centers applying for such grants.

22 “(d) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall
 23 provide technical assistance to recipients of grants under
 24 this section regarding best practices for the implementa-
 25 tion of services through such grants.

26 “(e) USE OF FUNDS.—

1 “(1) IN GENERAL.—A crisis center receiving a
 2 grant under this section shall use the grant to pro-
 3 vide follow-up services to individuals who directly
 4 contact the 9–8–8 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (in-
 5 cluding by call, text, or chat) and who are identified
 6 by the crisis center as being at risk of suicide or ex-
 7 periencing a mental health or substance use crisis.

8 “(2) FOLLOW-UP SERVICES.—Follow-up serv-
 9 ices referred to in paragraph (1)—

10 “(A) may include—

11 “(i) check-ins to assess well-being and
 12 level of risk;

13 “(ii) outreach to ensure engagement
 14 in services and supports, in coordination
 15 with mobile crisis service providers if in-
 16 volved;

17 “(iii) collaboration with family, care-
 18 givers, and natural social supports; and

19 “(iv) referrals based on the needed
 20 level of care; and

21 “(B) shall be provided only to individuals
 22 described in paragraph (1), consistent with sub-
 23 section (f).

24 “(f) INFORMED CONSENT AND PRIVACY PROTEC-
 25 TIONS.—

1 “(1) IN GENERAL.—A crisis center receiving a
2 grant under this section may provide follow-up serv-
3 ices to an individual only after obtaining the in-
4 formed consent of such individual.

5 “(2) ELEMENTS OF CONSENT.—In obtaining
6 informed consent under paragraph (1), the crisis
7 center shall clearly and conspicuously disclose—

8 “(A) the nature, scope, and purpose of fol-
9 low-up services;

10 “(B) the types of communications that
11 may be used;

12 “(C) the duration and frequency of such
13 follow-up; and

14 “(D) the individual’s right to decline or
15 withdraw consent at any time without affecting
16 access to crisis services.

17 “(3) LIMITATION.—Follow-up services under
18 this section may not include the sharing of person-
19 ally identifiable information with third parties with-
20 out the express, written, and revocable consent of
21 the individual, except as otherwise required by Fed-
22 eral or State law.

23 “(4) NO UNINTENDED INTERVENTIONS.—A cri-
24 sis center shall ensure that follow-up services are
25 conducted in a manner that does not result in invol-

1 untary or coercive interventions absent imminent
2 risk.

3 “(5) GUIDANCE.—Not later than 1 year after
4 the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary,
5 acting through the Assistant Secretary for Mental
6 Health and Substance Use, shall develop and dis-
7 seminate model national standards for informed con-
8 sent and privacy protections specific to follow-up
9 services under this section, consistent with applicable
10 Federal and State privacy laws, including the Health
11 Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of
12 1996.

13 “(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To
14 carry out this section, there is authorized to be appro-
15 priated \$30,000,000 for fiscal year 2026, to remain avail-
16 able until expended.”.

17 **SEC. 3. 9-8-8 IMPROVEMENT.**

18 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

19 (1) 9-8-8.—The term “9-8-8” means 9-8-8,
20 as designated as the universal telephone number
21 within the United States for the purpose of the na-
22 tional suicide prevention and mental health crisis
23 hotline system under section 251(e)(4) of the Com-
24 munications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 251(e)(4)).

1 (2) COMMERCIAL MOBILE SERVICE.—The term
 2 “commercial mobile service” has the meaning given
 3 the term in section 332(d) of the Communications
 4 Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 332(d)).

5 (3) NON-SERVICE-INITIALIZED HANDSET.—The
 6 term “non-service-initialized handset” has the mean-
 7 ing given the term in section 9.10(o)(3)(i) of title
 8 47, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor
 9 regulation.

10 (b) TRANSMISSION OF ALL CALLS AND TEXTS.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 270 days
 12 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Federal
 13 Communications Commission shall promulgate regu-
 14 lations to ensure that each provider of commercial
 15 mobile service transmits all calls and text messages
 16 made or sent to 9–8–8, including a call or text mes-
 17 sage that originates from a non-service-initialized
 18 handset (if the call or text message originates on a
 19 phone using a compliant radio frequency protocol of
 20 the provider).

21 (2) IMPLEMENTATION.—A provider of commer-
 22 cial mobile service shall comply with the regulations
 23 promulgated under paragraph (1) not later than 1
 24 year after the date on which the regulations are pro-
 25 mulgated.

1 (c) CONFIGURATION OF MULTI-LINE TELEPHONE
 2 SYSTEMS FOR DIRECT DIALING.—

3 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 721 of the Commu-
 4 nications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 623) is amended—

5 (A) in the section heading, by inserting
 6 “**AND 9-8-8**” after “**9-1-1**”;

7 (B) in subsection (a), by inserting “or 9-
 8 8-8” after “9-1-1”; and

9 (C) in subsection (b), by inserting “or 9-
 10 8-8” after “9-1-1”.

11 (2) APPLICABILITY.—

12 (A) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made
 13 by paragraph (1) shall apply to actions occur-
 14 ring on and after the date that is 2 years after
 15 the date of enactment of this Act.

16 (B) EXCEPTION.—The amendment made
 17 by paragraph (1)(C) shall not apply to the
 18 management or operation of a multi-line tele-
 19 phone system installed before the date that is 2
 20 years after the date of enactment of this Act,
 21 if the system is not able to be configured to sat-
 22 isfy the requirements of the amendment, with-
 23 out an improvement to the hardware or soft-
 24 ware of the system.

