

Calendar No. 379

119TH CONGRESS }
2d Session }

SENATE

{ REPORT
119-119 }

988 LIFELINE LOCATION IMPROVEMENT ACT
OF 2026

R E P O R T

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION

ON

S. 3199



APRIL 22, 2026.—Ordered to be printed

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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988 LIFELINE LOCATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2026

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Mr. CRUZ, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany S. 3199]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, to which was referred the bill (S. 3199) to establish a multi-stakeholder advisory committee tasked with providing detailed recommendations to address challenges to transmitting geolocation information with calls to the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and an amendment to the the title and recommends that the bill, as amended, do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of S. 3199 is to direct the Federal Communications Commission to initiate a notice of inquiry (NOI) and to instruct the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to complete a study and report providing detailed recommendations to address challenges to transmitting geolocation information with calls to the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

BACKGROUND AND NEEDS

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline launched on January 1, 2005, with funding from a Federal grant awarded by the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to Vibrant Emotional Health, a New York City-based nonprofit affiliate of

Mental Health America.¹ The service initially connected 109 crisis centers nationwide through the 1-800-273-8255 (TALK) hotline and answered approximately 20,000 calls in its first year.²

In a 2019 report to Congress, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) proposed designating 988 as the three-digit number for the hotline, finding that the abbreviated number “would likely make it easier for Americans in crisis to access potentially life-saving resources.”³ On July 16, 2020, the FCC adopted rules establishing 988 as the nationwide three-digit dialing code.⁴ On October 17, 2020, the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 was signed into law, codifying 988 as the new Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and Veterans Crisis Line phone number.⁵ In November 2021, the FCC adopted additional rules expanding 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (988 Lifeline) services to include text messaging.⁶ By July 2022, the United States completed its transition from the 10-digit National Suicide Prevention Lifeline to the 988 Lifeline.⁷

Today, the 988 Lifeline is a national network of over 200 crisis centers, supported by State and local resources as well as Federal grants administered by SAMHSA. The 988 Lifeline provides around-the-clock, confidential support to individuals in crisis.⁸ Since the launch of the 988 Lifeline in July 2022, the hotline has received more than 19.8 million contacts across calls, texts, and chats.⁹

A long-standing challenge for the 988 Lifeline has been improving the routing of 988 calls and text messages so that individuals in crisis can be connected to their local crisis centers, rather than routed based on the area code of the caller, which was the Lifeline’s original architecture.¹⁰ In the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020, Congress required the FCC to report on the cost and feasibility of conveying automatic dispatchable location with 988 calls. In 2021, the FCC submitted its required report to Congress, explaining that automatic dispatchable location information for 988 raises complex technical, legal, and privacy issues and recommending that relevant Federal, State, local, industry and mental health stakeholders work together to develop recommendations on whether and how to proceed.¹¹

The report also distinguished between georouting, which enables calls to be directed to local crisis centers without transmitting precise location information, and geolocation, which enables a caller’s

¹“About 988,” 988 Lifeline, <https://988lifeline.org/about/>.

²Ibid.

³“FCC Staff Recommends 3-Digit Number for Suicide Prevention Hotline,” Federal Communications Commission, August 15, 2019, <https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-staff-recommends-3-digit-number-suicide-prevention-hotline>.

⁴“988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline,” Federal Communications Commission, <https://www.fcc.gov/988-suicide-and-crisis-lifeline>.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹“988 Lifeline Performance Metrics,” Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/988/performance-metrics>.

¹⁰Federal Communications Commission, *FCC Adopts Rules Requiring Georouting for Texts to 988*, July 24, 2025, <https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-adopts-rules-requiring-georouting-texts-988>.

¹¹Federal Communications Commission, *988 Geolocation Report*, April 15, 2021, <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-371709A1.pdf> (recommending “the establishment of a multi-stakeholder advisory committee, with experts tasked with developing detailed recommendations on how to address several challenging matters that must be resolved to make transmitting dispatchable location with 988 calls feasible.”).

precise location information to be transmitted with the call for emergency response purposes, finding that implementing geolocation raises complex issues related to technical feasibility, accuracy, privacy, legal authority, and cost recovery, while georouting provided benefits without many of the same burdens.

In September 2024, two major U.S. wireless carriers introduced georouting capabilities, allowing 988 calls to be routed based on a caller's approximate location rather than area code. In October 2024, the FCC adopted rules requiring all U.S. wireless providers to implement georouting for 988 calls.¹² Nationwide providers had to comply with georouting requirements for wireless calls to 988 by January 13, 2025, while non-nationwide providers must comply by December 14, 2026.¹³ In July 2025, the FCC adopted rules requiring wireless providers to implement georouting solutions for 988 text messages.¹⁴

The 988 Lifeline Location Improvement Act of 2026 would direct the FCC to initiate an NOI to gather input on the best ways to address geolocation. The bill would also require the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct a study and report to Congress on the opportunities and obstacles related to implementing geolocation for the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.¹⁵

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS

S. 3199 would do the following:

- Require the FCC to initiate an NOI within 270 days of enactment to address the challenges to transmitting geolocation information with calls to the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. In the NOI, the FCC would need to consider its legal authorities to mandate geolocation information; the protection of consumer privacy; feasibility and implementation standards for telecommunications providers, 911 providers, public safety answering points, and local crisis centers; assessment of potential costs and recovery of costs; technical challenges; and available technologies for geolocation information.
- Require the GAO to conduct a study and provide a report to Congress not later than 180 days after enactment on the opportunities and challenges related to implementing geolocation for the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, including policy considerations regarding consumer privacy and legal authority, technical implementation standards, and cost recovery.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

S. 3199 was introduced on November 19, 2025, by Senator Barasso (for himself and Senators Luján, Blackburn, Capito, Crapo, Daines, Fischer, Gillibrand, Hassan, Klobuchar, Risch, and Warnock) and was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate. Senator Ossoff was later added as a cosponsor. On February 12, 2026, the Committee met in open Executive Session and, by voice vote, ordered S. 3199 re-

¹² Supra note 4.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Supra note 10.

¹⁵ Supra note 11.

ported favorably with an amendment (in the nature of a substitute with an amendment).

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S. 3482, the 988 Lifeline Location Improvement Act of 2023, was introduced on December 13, 2023, by Senator Barrasso (for himself and Senator Luján) and was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate. The bill had 10 additional cosponsors.

H.R. 6763, an identical House bill to S. 3482, was introduced on December 13, 2023, by Representative Molinaro (for himself and Representative Tonko) and was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives. The bill had 25 additional cosponsors.

ESTIMATED COSTS

In accordance with paragraph 11(a) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate and section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee provides the following cost estimate, prepared by the Congressional Budget Office:

S. 3199, 988 Lifeline Location Improvement Act of 2026			
As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation on February 12, 2026			
By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2026	2026-2031	2026-2036
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	*	*	not estimated
Increases <i>net direct spending</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2037?	No	Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply? No	
		Mandate Effects	
Increases <i>on-budget deficits</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2037?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	Yes, Under Threshold
* = between zero and \$500,000.			

S. 3199 would require the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to solicit public comment on the challenges of transmitting geolocation information for calls to the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and to evaluate the information it receives. The bill also would require the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to report to the Congress on the challenges and potential benefits of implementing geolocation capabilities for the lifeline.

Based on the cost of similar solicitations of public comment, CBO estimates that the cost for the FCC to implement the bill would total less than \$500,000 over the 2026–2031 period. Because the FCC is authorized to collect fees each year sufficient to offset the appropriated costs of its regulatory activities, CBO estimates that the net cost to the FCC would be negligible, assuming appropriation actions consistent with that authority.

Based on the cost of similar activities, CBO estimates that the cost for GAO to complete the report would be less than \$500,000. Any related spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

If the FCC increases annual fees to offset the cost of implementing provisions in the bill, S. 3199 would increase the cost of an existing private-sector mandate as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) on private-sector entities required to pay those fees. CBO estimates that the incremental cost of the mandate would be small and would fall well below the annual threshold established for private-sector mandates (\$214 million in 2026, adjusted annually for inflation).

S. 3199 contains no intergovernmental mandates as defined in UMRA.

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are David Hughes (for federal costs) and Rachel Austin (for mandates). The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.

PHILLIP L. SWAGEL,
Director, Congressional Budget Office.

REGULATORY IMPACT STATEMENT

Because S. 3199 does not create any new programs, the legislation will have no additional regulatory impact, and will result in no additional reporting requirements. The legislation will have no further effect on the number or types of individuals and businesses regulated, the economic impact of such regulation, the personal privacy of affected individuals, or the paperwork required from such individuals and businesses.

CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING

In compliance with paragraph 4(b) of rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee provides that no provisions contained in the bill, as reported, meet the definition of congressionally directed spending items under the rule.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1. Short title

This section would provide that the bill may be cited as the “988 Lifeline Location Improvement Act of 2026”.

Section 2. Definitions

This section would define the terms “911 system service provider”, “appropriate committees of Congress”, “dispatchable location”, “emergency communications center”, and “telecommunications service provider”.

Section 3. Notice of inquiry

This section would require the FCC to initiate an NOI to address challenges associated with transmitting geolocation information for calls to the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. The NOI would have to be initiated no later than 270 days after enactment.

In evaluating responses to the NOI, the Commission would be required to consider the following:

- legal authority regarding the use of geolocation, including dispatchable location, for 988 calls;
- consumer privacy protections;
- feasibility and technical standards;
- potential costs, funding needs, and cost-recovery options;
- technical challenges for geolocation transmission in 988 American Sign Language video services; and
- technologies currently available to provide dispatchable location information and methods for transferring location information from 988 to 911.

Section 4. GAO report

This section would require the Comptroller General, within 180 days of enactment, to conduct a study on the opportunities and challenges related to implementing geolocation for the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and submit a report on this study to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate; the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate; and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives. The report would be required to address consumer privacy and legal authority to mandate geolocation; technical standards for telecommunications providers, 911 system providers, emergency communications centers, and local crisis centers; and potential cost recovery or additional funding requirements for telecommunications providers, the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, the Veterans Crisis Line, and local crisis centers.

In conducting the study, the Comptroller General would be required to consult with the following:

- representatives from telecommunications service providers or their associations;
- handset manufacturers or their associations;
- emergency communications centers or their associations;
- 911 system providers or their associations;
- State governments, including low-population States;
- local governments, including those representing small or rural communities;
- the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline;
- local crisis centers or their associations;
- the Veterans Crisis Line;
- the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration;
- mental health services organizations;
- community mental health centers; and
- individuals experienced in providing services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing and those who access the 988 Lifeline through direct video calling and video relay services.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with paragraph 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee states that the bill as reported would make no change to existing law.