

June 3, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, and Education  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-128 The Capitol  
Washington, DC, 20004

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, and Education  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-128 The Capitol  
Washington, DC, 20004

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, and Education  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC, 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, and Education  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC, 20515

Dear Chairwoman Capito, Ranking Member Baldwin, Chairman Aderholt, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

As the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress considers their Fiscal Year 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Budget, we, the 72 undersigned organizations who represent and support America's teenagers and young adults, and their families are writing to urge the inclusion of bipartisan no-cost report language for two programs: the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and the Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention Campus Grants.

In 2023, 40% of high school students reported feeling hopelessness and sadness.<sup>i</sup> 9% of students attempted suicide, a national rate that increased by 12.5% over the last decade.<sup>ii</sup> Between 2018 and 2022, over 30,000 teens and young adults died by suicide, establishing suicide as the second leading cause of death for Americans aged 15 to 24.<sup>iii</sup> In 2022, Congress took action to address this epidemic by enacting 988, the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. However, research shows that as recently as 2024, only 5% of young adults were aware of 988 and its life-saving support, compared to 15% of all adults.<sup>iv</sup> Thirty-seven states, including Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia, and Connecticut, have introduced or passed laws to boost youth awareness of 988 by requiring its publication on new student identification cards. No-cost report language to publish 988 on newly-printed Student IDs and Drivers Licenses will fill gaps in the patchwork system to ensure all teens and young adults are aware of and have access to 988 services when in crisis.

Crisis services must be complemented by youth prevention and early intervention services. Tragically, among young adults with recurrent suicidal ideation or attempts, nearly 50% will not seek help.<sup>v</sup> Rural and male students are even less likely to seek mental health help compared to peers.<sup>vi,vii</sup> This delay not only increases risk of suicide but escalates mental health acuity and future costs to treat.<sup>viii</sup> Student led mental health groups, which are already an authorized use under Garrett Lee Smith campus grants, have succeeded on postsecondary, technical, and vocation school campuses in combatting treatment ambivalence, with demonstrated improvements to student treatment-seeking and informal peer mental health referral behaviors.<sup>ix</sup> No-cost report language will prioritize these important uses in order to prepare peers on campus and save lives.

Therefore, we urge you to include the following language:

**988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.** — *The Committee continues to be concerned that suicide remains a leading cause of death amongst adolescents and young adults, however only 5% of individuals aged 18-29 were aware of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline in 2024. The*

*Committee directs SAMHSA to coordinate with the relevant Departments and young adult behavioral health stakeholders, such as stakeholders serving secondary school and postsecondary students to increase adolescent and young adult awareness of 988 via awareness activities, including the publication of 988 on newly-printed standard issue student identification cards and driver's licenses, as authorized under P.L. 117-328 §1103.*

**Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention Campus Grants.** — *The Committee recognizes that delays in youth receiving treatment leads to higher acuity levels, health care costs, and risks of suicide. Campus programs training students on primary prevention and early intervention with their classmates have been shown to improve treatment-seeking and mental health referrals. The Committee directs the Assistant Secretary to prioritize applications proposing to support student groups on campus that both educate and train students on primary prevention and intervention with their classmates at risk of experiencing mental health and substance use disorders, with the goal of increasing classmates' treatment-seeking behaviors as is authorized under P.L. 117-328 § 1423. Additionally, the Assistant Secretary shall prioritize applications that include a plan to seek input from relevant stakeholders including student-serving mental health groups on campus as authorized. The Assistant Secretary shall include in their study and annual report to Congress details on the initial effectiveness of the awarded grants prioritizing such activities and input.*

We thank you for your ongoing attention to youth mental health in our country, and especially for addressing the suicide epidemic among adolescents and young adults. Including both report language requests will help prevent suicide among young Americans across the United States. Thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,

**National**

Active Minds  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Art Therapy Association  
American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
American Group Psychotherapy Association  
American Occupational Therapy Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychiatric Nurses Association  
Anxiety and Depression Association of America  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare (AABH)  
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)  
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy, & Action  
First Focus Campaign for Children

Inseparable  
International OCD Foundation  
International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses  
Mental Health America  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Association for Rural Mental Health (NARMH)  
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors (NACBHDD)  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
National Board for Certified Counselors  
National Eating Disorders Association  
National Federation of Families  
National League for Nursing  
National Register of Health Service Psychologists

NHMH - No Health without Mental Health  
Postpartum Support International  
REDC Consortium  
Sandy Hook Promise  
School Social Work Association of America  
The Jed Foundation  
The National Association of Therapeutic  
Schools and Programs  
Tourette Association of America  
Treatment Communities of America

#### **Alaska**

Active Minds at Palmer High School

#### **Alabama**

Active Minds at Athens State University  
Active Minds at The University of Alabama at  
Birmingham

#### **California**

Active Minds at Cypress College  
Active Minds at De Anza College  
Active Minds at San Diego State University

#### **Florida**

Active Minds at Florida Gulf Coast University  
Active Minds at Florida State University  
Active Minds at Rollins College  
Active Minds at University of Florida

#### **Louisiana**

Active Minds at Carencro High School

#### **Massachusetts**

Active Minds at Northbridge High School  
Active Minds at Bristol Plymouth Regional  
Technical School  
Active Minds at Holbrook Middle High School  
Active Minds at Medfield High School  
Active Minds at Stonehill College  
Active Minds at Whitman Hanson Regional  
High School

#### **Maryland**

Active Minds at Loyola University Maryland

#### **Maine**

Active Minds at South Portland High School

#### **Mississippi**

Active Minds at Oakland University  
New Jersey

#### **New Jersey**

Active Minds at Rider University  
Active Minds at Stevens University

#### **New York**

Active Minds at New York University

#### **Ohio**

Active Minds at Ohio Dominican University

#### **Oklahoma**

Active Minds at Oklahoma State University

#### **Pennsylvania**

Active Minds at Drexel University  
Active Minds at Lackawanna College  
Active Minds at Northampton Community  
College  
Active Minds at University of Pittsburgh

#### **Rhode Island**

Active Minds at East Providence High School

#### **Texas**

Active Minds at Northeast Texas Community  
College

#### **Washington**

Active Minds at Inglemoor High School

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- <sup>i</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2024). *Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary & Trends Report: 2013–2023*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.cdc.gov/yrbs/dstr/index.html>
- <sup>ii</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2024). *Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary & Trends Report: 2013–2023*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.cdc.gov/yrbs/dstr/index.html>
- <sup>iii</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *WISQARS Fatal and Nonfatal Injury Reports*. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. <https://wisqars.cdc.gov/reports/?o=MORT&y1=2018&y2=2022&t=0&d=&i=2&m=20810&g=00&me=0&s=0&r=0&ry=2&e=0&yp=65&a=5Yr&g1=15&g2=20&a1=0&a2=199&r1=INTENT&r2=NONE&r3=NONE&r4=NONE>
- <sup>iv</sup> Annenberg Public Policy Center (2024). *Fewer Than 1 in 5 Know the 988 Suicide Lifeline*. <https://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/fewer-than-1-in-5-know-the-988-suicide-lifeline/>
- <sup>v</sup> Woolverton, et. Al. (2024). *Barriers and risk factors associated with non-treatment-seeking for suicidality onset during the COVID-19 pandemic among young adults*. *Psychiatry Research*, Volume 340. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2024.116095>
- <sup>vi</sup> Thorne, K. & Ebener, D. (2020). *Psychosocial predictors of rural psychological help seeking*. *Journal of Rural Mental Health*, 44(4), 232-242. <https://doi.org/10.1037/rmh0000159>
- <sup>vii</sup> Chatmon, B. (2020). *Males and Mental Health Stigma*. *American Journal of Men's Health*, 14(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1557988320949322>
- <sup>viii</sup> McLaughlin, C. (2004). *Delays in Treatment for Mental Disorders and Health Insurance Coverage*. *Health Services Research*, 39(2), 221-224. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6773.2004.00224.x>
- <sup>ix</sup> Sontag-Padilla et. Al. (2018). *Strengthening College Students' Mental Health Knowledge, Awareness, and Helping Behaviors: The Impact of Active Minds, a Peer Mental Health Organization*. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 57(7). <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29960695/>