

.....
(Original Signature of Member)

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To require the Federal Communications Commission to study the feasibility of designating a simple, easy-to-remember dialing code to be used for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. STEWART introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To require the Federal Communications Commission to study the feasibility of designating a simple, easy-to-remember dialing code to be used for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system.

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 “National Suicide Hot-
5 line Improvement Act of 2017”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) According to the National Center for Health
2 Statistics, suicide rates in the United States have
3 surged to their highest levels in nearly 30 years.

4 (2) The overall suicide rate rose by 24 percent
5 from 1999 to 2014.

6 (3) The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
7 (1-800-273-TALK [8255]), created under the lead-
8 ership of the Center for Mental Health Services of
9 the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
10 Administration (commonly known as “SAMHSA”),
11 is a network of 161 crisis centers that provide a toll-
12 free hotline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to anyone
13 experiencing a mental health or suicidal emergency
14 or crisis.

15 (4) In 1967, the President’s Commission on
16 Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice rec-
17 ommended the creation of a single telephone number
18 that could be used nationwide for reporting emer-
19 gencies.

20 (5) In 1968, the Federal Communications Com-
21 mission agreed upon the number 9-1-1, one of eight
22 N11 dialing codes, as a simple, easy-to-remember
23 telephone number to be the dedicated number for re-
24 porting emergencies, and 9-1-1 became the national

1 emergency number for individuals in the United
2 States to access police, fire, and ambulance services.

3 (6) Based on the success of the 9–1–1 nation-
4 wide emergency number, a study by the Federal
5 Communications Commission regarding the use of a
6 simple, easy-to-remember dedicated 3-digit dialing
7 code for a suicide prevention and mental health cri-
8 sis hotline system would be beneficial in the preven-
9 tion of suicide nationwide.

10 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

11 In this Act—

12 (1) the term “Assistant Secretary” means the
13 Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Sub-
14 stance Use;

15 (2) the term “Commission” means the Federal
16 Communications Commission;

17 (3) the term “covered dialing code” means a
18 simple, easy-to-remember, 3-digit dialing code; and

19 (4) the term “N11 dialing code” means an ab-
20 breviated dialing code consisting of 3 digits, of
21 which—

22 (A) the first digit may be any digit other
23 than “1” or “0”; and

24 (B) each of the last 2 digits is “1”.

1 **SEC. 4. FCC STUDY AND REPORT.**

2 (a) STUDY.—

3 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission, in coordi-
4 nation with the Assistant Secretary, shall conduct a
5 study that—

6 (A) examines the feasibility of designating
7 an N11 dialing code or other covered dialing
8 code to be used for a national suicide preven-
9 tion and mental health crisis hotline system;
10 and

11 (B) analyzes the effectiveness of the cur-
12 rent National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, in-
13 cluding how well the lifeline is working to ad-
14 dress the needs of veterans.

15 (2) REQUIREMENTS.—In conducting the study
16 under paragraph (1), the Commission shall—

17 (A) request that the Assistant Secretary
18 study and report to the Commission on the po-
19 tential impact of the designation of an N11 di-
20 aling code, or other covered dialing code, for a
21 suicide prevention and mental health crisis hot-
22 line system on—

23 (i) suicide prevention;

24 (ii) crisis services;

25 (iii) the National Suicide Prevention
26 Lifeline; and

1 (iv) the Veterans Crisis Line;

2 (B) consider—

3 (i) each of the N11 dialing codes, in-
4 cluding the codes that are used for other
5 purposes; and

6 (ii) other covered dialing codes;

7 (C) consult with the North American
8 Numbering Council; and

9 (D) consult with the Secretary of Veterans
10 Affairs with respect to how well the current Na-
11 tional Suicide Prevention Lifeline is working to
12 address the needs of veterans.

13 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date
14 of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall submit to
15 Congress a report on the study conducted under sub-
16 section (a) that—

17 (1) recommends a particular N11 dialing code
18 or other covered dialing code to be used for a na-
19 tional suicide prevention and mental health crisis
20 hotline system;

21 (2) outlines the logistics of designating such a
22 dialing code;

23 (3) estimates the costs associated with desig-
24 nating such a dialing code, including—

1 (A) the costs incurred by service providers,
2 including—

3 (i) translation changes in the network;

4 and

5 (ii) cell site analysis and reprogram-
6 ming by wireless carriers; and

7 (B) the costs incurred by States and local-
8 ities;

9 (4) provides legislative recommendations for
10 designating such a dialing code;

11 (5) provides a cost-benefit analysis comparing
12 the recommended dialing code with the current Na-
13 tional Suicide Prevention Lifeline; and

14 (6) makes other recommendations for improving
15 the national suicide prevention lifeline system gen-
16 erally, which may include—

17 (A) increased funding;

18 (B) increased public education and aware-
19 ness; and

20 (C) improved infrastructure and oper-
21 ations.