

## National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 (H.R. 4194/S. 2661)

### BOTTOM LINE

As suicides are on the rise in nearly all demographics across the nation, a dedicated three-digit number (9-8-8) for those experiencing a mental health crisis would make it easier for millions of Americans to access critical mental health resources and receive life-saving help.

### REQUEST

Pass the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 in the House

In 2019, Representatives Chris Stewart (R-UT), along with 49 original cosponsors, and Senators Cory Gardner (R-CO), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Jerry Moran (R-KS), and Jack Reed (D-RI) introduced the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act. This bill requires the Federal Communications Commission to designate 9-8-8 as the universal telephone number for a national suicide prevention and mental-health crisis hotline.

May 13, 2020, the Senate unanimously passed S.2661 and the bill is now with the House.

#### Why do we need the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act?

**Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death for all Americans** and the 2nd leading cause of death for individuals aged 10-34. In 2018, more than 10 million people seriously considered suicide, more than 1 million attempted suicide and more than 48,000 lives were lost to suicide.

**COVID-19 has exacerbated the need for behavioral health services.** The pandemic has increased anxiety, fear, isolation and grief, leading to declining mental health and an increase in substance use in our communities that will only continue to get worse.

**As suicides are on the rise in nearly all demographics across the nation,** a dedicated three-digit number (9-8-8) for those experiencing a mental health crisis would make it easier for millions of Americans to access critical mental health resources and receive life-saving help.

Establishing a **recognizable national number for mental health and suicide prevention** would be a transformative step for our nation's public health response to the suicide and drug overdose crises. Such a code would make it easier for millions of Americans to access timely and effective crisis intervention services, better meet the growing need for such services and ultimately help get people in crisis to the appropriate level of care in the community of mental health and addiction concerns by aligning crisis services for these issues with other emergency services for things like fires, automobile accidents and social service referrals.

