

January 19, 2023

**Senate Budget & Tax Committee  
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

*SB 3 988 Trust Fund – Funding*

**Mary Kavanagh is pleased to support SB 3 988 Trust Fund – Funding.** This bill provides much needed additional funding for the 988 Trust Fund to support reliable planning and capacity building for the Maryland 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline network.

Last year, Maryland established the 988 Trust Fund and dedicated funding for 988 Lifeline providers for essentially the first time. This funding was critical to support Maryland’s transition to 988, the first nationwide three-digit access code for suicidal and behavioral health crisis calls and texts. The helplines that make up Maryland’s Lifeline network provide free, 24/7 supportive counseling and safety planning to residents for decades, and the increased call volume and visibility associated with the transition to 988 demands new and continued state investment. Maryland communities need mental health and emotional support more than ever and investing in the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is a critical way to provide that support.

Why do the people of Maryland need this? Because where do they go when a psychiatrist can’t see them for three weeks? Those not in crisis may go to work, school, or wherever they need to go as they wait. My brother, Tim, however, could not wait. He went, instead, to a car and shot himself in the head. We found the appointment date written on a notepad in his apartment.

Tim had wanted help, but that help proved too late. Help does not have to be too late for others now, who, like Tim, don’t want to die but who just want to silence the anxiety and angst and hopelessness that wear at their souls. And it does not need to be too late for their families, friends and colleagues who might otherwise bear the burden of the eternal “What if?”

Maryland has a strong foundation that can be built upon to create the robust 988 network that will keep residents safe and well, but continued investment is needed. **Mary Kavanagh, in the name of her brother Timothy Kavanagh who died by suicide on September 24, 2021, urges the Senate Budget & Tax Committee to pass SB 3.**

