

SB 122_988 youth education material_BHSB_FAVORABLE

Uploaded by: Dan Rabbitt

Position: FAV



January 17, 2024

**Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

SB 122 – Education – Provision of Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline Telephone Number - Alteration

Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) is a nonprofit organization that serves as the local behavioral health authority (LBHA) for Baltimore City. BHSB works to increase access to a full range of quality behavioral health (mental health and substance use) services and advocates for innovative approaches to prevention, early intervention, treatment, crisis response, and recovery for individuals, families, and communities. Baltimore City represents nearly 35 percent of the public behavioral health system in Maryland, serving over 78,000 people with mental illness and substance use disorders (collectively referred to as “behavioral health”) annually.

Behavioral Health System Baltimore supports SB122 – Education – Provision of Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline Telephone Number - Alteration. SB122 will ensure students receive up to date information about mental health crisis resources and the 988 Lifeline while not increasing costs for counties. The Senate should support this commonsense legislation.

School-aged children need to have full access to mental health and suicide prevention resources. Tragically, suicide and poor mental health have been on the rise since pandemic among young people, and death suicide has been a leading cause of death among middle and high school-aged children for many years. Free, confidential supports can help young people who are struggling and who may feel hesitant to share their distress with their parents or other authority figures.

The General Assembly recognized the importance of free and confidential crisis supports years ago when they directed counties to share information about the Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline with all middle school and high school students through school handbooks and identification cards. Maryland has been a leader over the years in providing crisis resources, and the federal government followed our state’s lead in launching the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline in 2022. The 988 Lifeline fulfills the same purpose of the Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline and Maryland has transitioned to primarily promoting the 988 network over the Maryland Crisis Youth Hotline. Counselors at 988 call centers have expertise in responding to young people experiencing distress and are the same organizations in most cases that answered the Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline. The materials provided through schools should be updated to reflect the transition to 988.

This bill will ensure students have the up to date information they need in the event of a mental health crisis. **BHSB urges the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to pass SB122.**

For more information, please contact BHSB Policy Director Dan Rabbitt at 443-401-6142

SB 122 - EEE - MDH- LOS.pdf

Uploaded by: Jason Caplan

Position: FAV



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

January 15, 2024

The Honorable Brian J Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

**RE: SB 0122 – Education - Provision of Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline Telephone Number
- Alteration – Letter of Support**

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of support for Senate Bill (SB) 122 – Provision of Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline Telephone Number - Alteration. SB 122 requires each county board to provide students in grades six through twelve with the telephone number for the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline in the school handbook and on a student's school identification card, an update from the previous Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline.

MDH supports this bill, which aligns with the statewide efforts to increase awareness in schools and updates the information from the previous Maryland crisis hotline to the 988 three-digit number. The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline provides free and confidential emotional support to anyone in emotional distress or experiencing a suicidal crisis 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. Services can be accessed via phone, text, or chat on the [9-8-8 website](#) and are available in more than 240 languages.

The Lifeline consists of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers (including nine regional crisis centers in Maryland), through funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). These call centers combine customized local care and resources with national standards and best practices.

We believe this bill will increase awareness and encourage Maryland youth and families to contact 988. People can call about themselves, their child, a friend, or for other loved ones and speak to a trained specialist who will help them manage the situation and connect to local services. If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov or (410) 260-3190.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary

SB122_MSEA_Lamb_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Lauren Lamb

Position: FAV

FAVORABLE
Senate Bill 122

Education – Provision of Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline Telephone Number – Alteration

Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
January 17, 2024

Lauren Lamb
Government Relations

The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 122, which would update the requirement that each county board of education provide students in grades 6-12 with the telephone number of the Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline to instead require that each county board of education provide students in grades 6-12 with the telephone number of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

Between 2016 and 2020, the rate of adolescents experiencing anxiety or depression increased by 36% in Maryland.¹ Public schools play an important role in supporting students' wellbeing, with 15% of adolescents in the U.S. receiving mental health services at school in 2019.² In addition to direct services, schools can take steps to raise awareness and reduce mental health stigma. Ensuring that students know how to easily access a confidential hotline provides a crucial resource for those in crisis. MSEA supports updating requirements to increase awareness of the recently established 9-8-8 Lifeline.

We urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on Senate Bill 122.

¹ *2022 Kids Count Data Book*, Annie E. Casey Foundation (2022). <https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-2022kidscountdatabook-2022.pdf>

² *Mental Health in Schools*, National Alliance on Mental Illness (2024). <https://www.nami.org/Advocacy/Policy-Priorities/Improving-Health/Mental-Health-in-Schools#:~:text=Youth%20are%20almost%20as%20likely,who%20saw%20a%20specialty%20provider.>

SB 122- Youth Crisis Hotline Testimony-2 - MA.docx

Uploaded by: Malcolm Augustine

Position: FAV

MALCOLM AUGUSTINE
Legislative District 47
Prince George's County

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

Executive Nominations Committee

Education, Energy and the
Environment Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 17, 2024

Senate Bill 122 - Education – Provision of Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline Telephone Number – Alteration

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to present **Senate Bill 122 - Education – Provision of Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline Telephone Number – Alteration**, which seeks to enhance the provision of mental health resources for Maryland youth through the alteration of the Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline telephone number on public school ID cards for grades 6-12. The proposed legislation aims to replace the reference to the Youth Crisis Hotline with the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, ensuring that life-saving information is readily accessible to students encountering a mental health crisis or contemplating suicide.

Under current law, each county board of education is mandated to furnish middle and high school students with the contact details of the Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline in their school handbooks and on their student identification cards. It is imperative to recognize the historical context that led to the creation of SB122. House Bill 973 in 2010 took a significant step forward by mandating the inclusion of the Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline on public school ID cards for grades 6-12. This legislation aimed to provide immediate access to mental health support for students in crisis. Subsequently, Senate Bill 405 in 2021 extended this initiative to higher education settings, acknowledging the need for continued mental health support as students transition to post-secondary education.

The most recent estimates from the Maryland Department of Health, for the academic years 2021-2022, underscore the urgency of addressing mental health concerns among our youth. Shockingly, over 26.8% of Maryland middle schoolers have seriously considered suicide in their lifetime, with 19.5% having made a plan, and 11% attempting. These figures have increased significantly since 2018, particularly among girls and Black and Hispanic/Latino students. Additionally, 39.2% of Maryland high schoolers have experienced such profound sadness or hopelessness that it impacted their usual activities, and 20.6% seriously contemplated suicide in the past year, revealing a troubling trend of escalating mental health crises.

MALCOLM AUGUSTINE
Legislative District 47
Prince George's County

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Following the adoption of 988 as the nation's mental health hotline, the call volume for the Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline (1-800-422-0009) has seen a decline. The hotline's original number is now utilized by the Maryland Department of Health as the primary contact for the state's substance use disorder hotline, with the Department designating 988 as the primary resource for mental health issues.

Providers highlight that 988 is more preferred by youth, primarily due to its capacity for text chat and online chat, whereas the Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline allows for calls only. This feature of text and online chat is particularly beneficial for students with disabilities, including those who are deaf and cannot easily communicate via speech.

Additionally, the simplicity of the three-digit 988 number is crucial in emergency situations, ensuring a quicker response and reducing potential barriers that might arise from the memorization of longer hotline numbers.

This bill would not add additional costs to schools, as they would not be required to reprint ID cards or handbooks that are already in use. Rather, schools must add 988 when new ID cards and handbooks are printed for incoming students in future school years.

Our commitment to the well-being of Maryland's youth extends beyond the classroom, and SB122 is a crucial step towards creating a culture that prioritizes mental health support.

In conclusion, I urge you to support SB122 as a vital piece of legislation that addresses the growing mental health crisis among Maryland's youth. By ensuring the easy access of 988 through school ID cards, we take a significant step forward in safeguarding the well-being of our students.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. I urge the committee to give a **favorable** report for **Senate Bill 122 - Education – Provision of Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline Telephone Number – Alteration**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Malcolm Augustine".

Senator Malcolm Augustine

SB122- FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Morgan Mills

Position: FAV

January 17, 2024

Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and distinguished members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

The National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maryland and our 11 local affiliates across the state represent a statewide network of more than 58,000 families, individuals, community-based organizations, and service providers. NAMI Maryland is a non-profit that is dedicated to providing education, support, and advocacy for persons with mental illnesses, their families and the wider community.

NAMI MD supports public policies and laws that enable all schools, public and private, to increase access to appropriate mental health services. Undiagnosed, untreated, or inadequately treated mental illnesses in children can significantly interfere with a student's ability to learn, grow and develop. Because children spend much of their productive time in school, NAMI believes that both public and private elementary, middle, and high schools should provide and/or facilitate and sustain provision of appropriate mental health services, supports, and appropriate accommodations.

This includes convenient and easily accessible information, including widely publicized availability of the 24/7 crisis hot-line. By including the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline in school handbooks and on student's school identification cards, we are equipping Maryland's youth with appropriate mental health and crisis services, should they ever need to utilize them.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report.