

Representative Marvin Abney, Chairman  
House Finance Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903  
May 22, 2025

Dear Representative Abney and members of the House Finance Committee,  
Thank you for the opportunity to share testimony in support of H 6128, the bill to ensure funding for the state's 988 Suicide Crisis Lifeline.

My name is Keely Taylor and I am a suicide loss survivor. I lost my husband Nate to suicide on September 2, 2021. I have since been dedicating my time to ensuring that no one needs to experience this traumatic loss.

Between January and February of this year, 1,991 calls to 988 were routed to Rhode Island, a 90% increase compared to the same time frame just two years earlier. Lifeline evaluations and caller feedback show crisis counselors effectively reduce distress and suicidality and help tens of thousands of people get through crises daily. Most callers are deescalated over the phone, with links made to in-person services when needed.

Nationally, an average of 10% of law enforcement agencies' total budgets and 21% of total staff time is spent responding to and transporting those with mental health conditions. Full implementation and promotion of 988 will reduce healthcare spending with early intervention, reduce the burden on emergency rooms and law enforcement, and improve outcomes for individuals experiencing a suicide or behavioral health crisis.

We all have a role to play in preventing suicide, and with your support, passage of this legislation will affirm Rhode Island's commitment to improving the lives of our residents and preventing the tragic loss of life to suicide in the future.

Thank you,

**Keely Taylor**

*RI Chapter Board Chair*

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