



May 14, 2026

Hon. Marvin Abney
Chairperson
House Finance Committee
HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: **Support of House Bill 8177 – An Act Relating to Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals – 988 Call Center and BH Link Operations Act**

Dear Chair Abney,

BuildRI is a domestic non-profit trade association comprised of four (4) contractor associations (the Labor Relations Division of the RI Chapter of the Associated General Contractors, the New England Mechanical Contractors’ Ass’n, the RI Mason Contractors’ Ass’n, and the RI and Southeast MA Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors’ Ass’n), and seventeen (17) Local Trade Unions comprised of approximately 10,000 local tradesmen and women. On behalf of BuildRI, and our partners, we are in support of House Bill 8177.

Construction workers consistently rank among the occupations with the highest suicide rates in the United States. A 2024 study found the suicide rate among construction workers to be 46.1 per 100,000, with other data placing the rate as high as 56 per 100,000 for male workers. Although construction workers represent only about 7.4% of the U.S. workforce, they account for nearly 18% of worker suicides across reported industries, making this a critical public health issue for the industry and the communities it serves.

Strengthening and sustaining 988 ensures that workers and their families have a simple, confidential way to reach trained crisis counselors 24/7 by call, text, or chat. Just as importantly, this legislation supports a broader crisis care system that connects individuals in distress to stabilization services and in-person support when needed, creating a coordinated pathway to care rather than leaving people to navigate a crisis alone.

For construction workers facing demanding physical labor, long hours, and persistent stigma around mental health, accessible crisis support can save lives. By passing House Bill 8177, the General Assembly will strengthen Rhode Island’s behavioral health safety net and ensure that people experiencing a mental health crisis receive the timely, appropriate care they deserve.

Thank you for your attention to this correspondence. Please contact the undersigned if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Anthony Cherry
Assistant Executive Director