

Hello, my name is Kira Cortese, and I'm a constituent reaching out to respectfully ask for your support of House Bill 8177.

Thank you for the important work you and other state leaders have already done to help make 988 a reality in Rhode Island and expand access to crisis support services. The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline has become a critical resource for Rhode Islanders experiencing mental health crises, suicidal thoughts, and substance use challenges. Every day, **it saves lives, reduces pressure on emergency rooms and law enforcement, and helps people access behavioral healthcare before situations escalate into tragedy.**

Sustainable funding is essential to ensure people can continue receiving timely, compassionate support when they need it most.

If mental health is as important as physical health, then our crisis response system should have a stable funding mechanism similar to the telecommunications surcharge that supports 911. **I am willing to pay an extra few extra dollars each year to save Rhode Islanders' lives.**

Thank you for your service to our community and for considering this important legislation to strengthen crisis response and mental health support across our state.

Sincerely,

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Barrington, RI

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