



PO Box 1700  
Woonsocket, RI 02895

401.235.7000  
[www.CommunityCareRI.org](http://www.CommunityCareRI.org)

House Finance Committee

82 Smith Street

Providence, RI 02903

May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Re: Written Testimony in support of Bill H8177

Dear Chairman and Members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Morgan Wynkoop. I am the Marketing and Development Assistant at Community Care Alliance and a lifelong Rhode Islander. I am writing in support of codifying 988 to ensure the long-term financial stability of a resource that benefits all Rhode Islanders. 988 is an integral part of our behavioral health care system and provides accessible support through call, text, and chat services 24 hours a day.

Rhode Island may be the smallest state, but it has made significant strides in building a coordinated behavioral health crisis response system. 988 provides Rhode Islanders with immediate access to trained behavioral health professionals who understand crisis intervention, local resources, and systems of care. This accessibility allows individuals to receive support whenever and however they need it.

Over the past several years, Rhode Island's 988 system has proven to be effective and impactful, earning recognition for response times, visibility, over-the-phone resolutions, and support for specialized populations including veterans, Spanish speakers, and LGBTQI+ youth. Continued outreach and public engagement efforts have also increased awareness and trust in the service, resulting in continued growth in utilization as more Rhode Islanders seek support.

The importance of sustaining this infrastructure cannot be overstated. 988 helps divert individuals from emergency rooms and the criminal justice system by connecting them with the appropriate level of behavioral health care and support. It ensures that people in crisis are met with trained professionals rather than systems that may already be overburdened or unequipped to provide specialized care.

Consistent and stable funding through this legislation would strengthen the 988 Lifeline system and help ensure continued staffing, training, sustainability, and access to resources needed to provide high-quality care. Supporting 988 means strengthening Rhode Island's continuum of



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care and continuing to build a behavioral health system that prioritizes health, safety, dignity, and accessibility for all residents.

I urge you to prioritize and move this bill forward. Investing in the 988 Lifeline is an investment in the health, safety, and well-being of every Rhode Islander.

Sincerely,

Morgan Wynkoop, BS

Marketing & Development Assistant

Community Care Alliance