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www.CommunityCareRI.org

Senator Hanna M. Gallo
Chair, Senate Education Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street Providence, RI 02903

March 10, 2026

Dear Sen. Gallo and Education committee members:

I'm writing on behalf of Community Care Alliance - the agency who staff and operates the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline - in support of S-2348 which will include behavioral health crisis resources on student ID cards.

1 in 4 Americans will struggle with suicidal thoughts in their lifetime and up to 50,000 will die by suicide per year. Social media and AI is likely to only increase these numbers, and we as a state need to respond now. Sharing resources with students and educators is a powerful, practical way to alleviate suffering, reduce stigma around help-seeking, and save lives.

Imagine you're a person struggling with suicidality or behavioral health issues. You may feel alone, ashamed, overwhelmed, and hopeless. You don't know where to turn, or who could help, or if anyone else has the same struggles that you do. Or, by contrast, imagine you're feeling this way, but you have ready and at your fingertips a 3-digit number that has been shared and celebrated as a trusted resource for those in crisis. In this second scenario, where help is normalized and promoted, you are far more likely to call for help. We know in suicide prevention that seconds matter, and that skillful response saves lives and opens the door to recovery.

If ID cards include information about 988 specifically, I'd like to tell you what a call may entail. Our call center answers over 22,000 calls per year. 988 staff are trained crisis counselors, working in person and in state to address urgent mental health and substance use needs for youth and adults. Our average call answer rate is less than 2 seconds, and over 95% of calls are resolved without need for emergency response. For those who do require emergency attention, we work closely with youth and adult mobile crisis and mobile response teams statewide and make every effort to deploy these resources in lieu of law enforcement or first responders when possible. There is no limit on talk time, and no reason too big or too small for calling, from loneliness to bullying to substance use or mental health needs. About 50% of callers are experiencing suicidality, with the remaining half experiencing a wide range of other concerns. Regardless of the reason for calling, our counselors are here to listen, to plan and problem solve, to build safety plans, and to refer or connect immediately to resources throughout the state for ongoing support and care.

Including suicide prevention resources on school IDs is simple, effective, and brilliant policy; it's a cost-effective way to bring awareness to many thousands of Rhode Islanders. By sharing these resources in



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such a visible, standardized way, the message we're sending to our school communities is that your lives matter, your emotions are valid, you are not alone, and there are people ready to listen.

Thank you for your public service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K Anderson".

Katherine K. Anderson
Vice President, Acute Services
Community Care Alliance