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Senator Louis P. DiPalma, Chairman Senate Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street Providence, RI 02903

April 13, 2026

Re: H7127 Article 10 Testimony in Support of 988

Dear Senator DiPalma and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am writing to express my support for the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. I work for the organization that manages the 988 Call Center, which gives me a unique perspective from observing the development this federally mandated crisis hotline since inception. The implementation was a well-managed coordinated effort requiring countless hours by numerous factions in order to install this very effective crisis line. The State also invested in a far-reaching marketing campaign. Now, the number of crisis calls increases year after year as more people are aware of this option to ask for help. The need is underscored by the fact that we receive thousands of calls each month. For example, in November of 2025, 988 answered 1737 calls! In all of 2025, 14,885 individuals asked for help using this number! Rhode Island can boast having among the fastest answer rates in the country at 1.6 seconds with 99% of calls staying within the State. Local help of this kind proves to be the most effective for people in crisis.

Having the 988 number to call gives every Rhode Islander a place to start when experiencing a crisis of any sort or level (no crisis is too small); and all the evidence from emergency responders to emergency departments indicate that the call center saves not only time and dollars, but saves peoples' lives. Yet, every year advocates have needed to come to the RI General Assembly to make a plea for funding. It is time to remove the uncertainty and put this issue to rest. I'm asking that, this year, Rhode Island determines a way to apply dedicated funding to the operation of the 988 Call Center.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Colleen Joubert". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Colleen Joubert
Director of Communications & Development