

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3703

COMMITTEES:

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
COMMITTEE ON BUDGET  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE  
JOINT COMMITTEE ON TAXATION

December 17, 2018

942

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Commissioners:

I write today to urge the Commission to adopt a brand new and practical 3-digit phone number for those needing mental health and suicide support.

Devastatingly, suicide rates are up in our country, and each year they seem to be getting worse. The Center for Disease Control has reported that over 40,000 Americans died by suicide last year, an increase over previous years. More needs to be done to help those in need, and to increase resources and improve access to mental health professionals to help those thinking of suicide.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, launched in 2004, is a national effort to reach people in crisis, using the number 1-800-273-TALK. This has been a true lifeline, growing from just a few calls that first year to over 2 million last year, including over 700,000 calls to the national Veterans Crisis Line. With its success has come an increase in demand, which we as government officials and policy leaders are obligated to keep up with.

I believe that a 3-digit code number, similar to 9-1-1 for emergencies, would most easily come to mind for those in need of intervention services. A new designated 3-digit code, such as 6-1-1, which has been recommended by my friends from Oregon Lines for Life, would be best because we need a dedicated hotline for only this issue.

Some have suggested using the existing 2-1-1 service, and having those operators then patch callers through to the suicide hotline. However, using 2-1-1 would simply delay someone's ability to receive services, in a situation where every second counts, rather than facilitating immediate access to suicide prevention services as Congress intended.

I write on behalf of those struggling with mental health issues, our veterans struggling with PTSD, and for those impacted by the tragedy of suicide. I urge you to designate a 3-digit code as a Behavioral Health and Suicide Crisis Lifeline. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

December 31, 2018

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
United States Senate  
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Wyden:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's implementation of the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2018. The Act directs the FCC to coordinate with the Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and the North American Numbering Council in conducting a study examining the feasibility of designating a simple, easy-to-remember, three-digit dialing code to be used for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system. The Act also requires us to produce a report recommending whether a particular N11 dialing code or simple, easy-to-remember, three-digit dialing code should be used for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system and, if so, the logistics and costs associated with designating such a dialing code, among other issues.

The Commission has begun its implementation of the Act. The North American Numbering Council is already studying the issue. And on December 10, 2018, the Wireline Competition Bureau issued a Public Notice seeking input from interested stakeholders on the issues that the Commission must address in the study and the report required by the statute. As we advance our statutory mission, we will be mindful of your concerns, which will be entered into the record of the proceeding.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ajit V. Pai".

Ajit V. Pai