I am writing because of my concerns around not allowing the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act to allow a 3-digit access for people who are struggling with lifethreatening issues. Last year, congress directed the FCC to consider creating a three digit number folks can dial to reach crisis services – a 911 for the brain, as our friend David Covington has called it.

I strongly support this idea! I think it will make it easier for folks to reach call centers like Lines for Life in Oregon, and it will help erase stigma by normalizing help-seeking:  we all know we call 911 when there’s a police or fire emergency, so naturally we ought to have an easy number to call when we’re having a mental wellness emergency.

As part of the process, a bureaucratic group in charge of three digit codes was asked to make a recommendation to the FCC.  This group, called the North American Numbering Council, recommended *against* creating a 3 digit number to access the NSPL.  And even worse, they recommended that if the FEC were to do this, they should just use 211Info.  In other words, they want to ADD A STEP for people in crisis – call 211 and let them refer people over to us.

It’s disappointing beyond belief – and frankly I think the Numbering Council just doesn’t get it.  They are elevating convenience over saving lives – something that is basically the opposite of everything we believe here.

Please support the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act and also support a 3-digit life line for people who are struggling with mental health challenges.

Thank you –

Brenda Martinek

Beaverton, Oregon