June 5, 2018

Federal Communications Commission

445 12th Street, SW

Washington, DC 20554

Re: Docket 18-336

Implementation of the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2018

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing you on behalf of Lines for Life to request a 3-digit code for Behavioral Health and Suicide Crisis Lifeline—and to reject the North American Numbering Council (NANC) recommendation that no such line should be established—AND that already existing 3-digit codes like 211 or 911 NOT be utilized as a substitute and instead designate a 3 digit code ONLY for suicide crisis calls.

Having answered countless crisis calls in over a decade that I have been doing this work, I can tell you that waiting or being transferred or on hold has been one of the barriers that has kept me from establishing rapport with some callers who have had to wait when calling in crisis for any number of reasons and a good number of them have hung up without sharing enough to know how at risk they were. To add another reason for them to wait when they are considering ending their life is a risk that should not be considered. We all know that 911 was established as a way for people to easily identify a number to call in the case of an emergency and to reach emergency responders without delay.

In the same spirit, having a 3-digit code for accessing the NSPL would make it easier for someone, already struggling with their mental health to focus or concentrate for any number of factors, to be able to call out when needed and especially in situations where using google to look up the number is not an option. According to data taken by the CDC (see <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db328-h.pdf>), suicide was the 10th leading cause of death in the United States in 2017 and from 2016 to 2017, the rate of suicide increased by 3.7%. How did suicide become one of the 10 leading causes of death in this country??

With that said, I do not understand the dilemma as to why it is not worth the effort to devote a 3-digit code ONLY for the NSPCL and NOT shared with any other entity (i.e., 911 or 211). Please do the right thing and give those that are struggling the best chance they have to reach out without delay or barriers that put them at further risk than they already are. Let’s get real about suicide and give it the attention it deserves and let’s make our best attempt at making it as easy as possible for people to reach out and connect with someone right away without delay when they are in a state of crisis. Let’s not let that one attempt they tried to call be their last.

Sincerely,

*Blaine Thornton*

Supervisor

Lines for Life