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December 10, 2018

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

Re: WC Docket no. 18-336 and CC Docket No. 92-105
Implementation of Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2018

Dear Commissioners:

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) is increasingly recognized as a critical component of the mental health and suicide crisis response/care system in the United States. The NSPL now serves as a central switchboard, seamlessly connecting millions of callers each year to the crisis center geographically nearest the caller from among a national network that has grown to include more than 160 crisis centers in 49 states. The program offers services in English and Spanish, operates a website (www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org), and works closely with social networking websites.

The evaluation of the NSPL has been ongoing since the program's inception and has become a gold standard in data-driven decision making. I have had the privilege of serving as the lead evaluator of the NSPL since its inception, and am writing to express my strong support for assigning an N11 number to facilitate access to the essential services that the NSPL provides.

Empirical evidence to support the effectiveness of crisis lines for suicide prevention has steadily grown. The findings that have emerged from the evaluations of the NSPL include the following:

- Seriously suicidal individuals reach out to the NSPL's crisis services.
- Callers' suicide risk (e.g., intent to die) is significantly reduced from the beginning to the end of the call.
- NSPL counselors mitigate imminent risk with and without the use of emergency services.
- Both initial crisis calls and follow-up calls reduce suicidal individuals' perceived risk of future suicidal behavior.

Given the NSPL's role as a national "safety net," it is critical to establish an N11 number as the foundation for NSPL's providing care to ever larger numbers of individuals in suicidal and other mental

health crises. Providing funding for an N11 number linked to NSPL's services is critically important to reduce the ever-increasing problem of suicide in the U.S.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Madelyn S. Gould". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Madelyn S. Gould, Ph.D., M.P.H.

Irving Philips Professor of Epidemiology (in Child Psychiatry)