

Susan Clark

LD 1216

May 13, 2025

I am writing in support of the proposed legislation that will create the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline 988 in Maine and to thank State Representatives Michael Brennan, Henry Ingwersen, Theresa Pierce and others for your leadership in sponsoring this bill.

As you will hear in testimony this week on LD 1216, 988 is a free, 24/7 number Mainers can text, call or use to chat any hour of the day or night for one-on-one support that is both confidential and judgement-free. Trained crisis specialists offer compassionate, timely support, a listening ear and referrals for people who are struggling with mental health. So many, especially so many of our youth, are struggling today.

The 988 program began in 2022 as a national service to assure an easy to remember dialing code, similar to our 911 emergency number. LD 1216 would make it a part of Maine law and formally consolidate the Maine Crisis Line program reached by calling (888) 568-1112. with the 988 hotline.

The shorter number is one that individuals, their friends and family members can easily, quickly use or share, making it a more accessible intervention tool against self-inflicted harm and death by suicide.

As a former three-term school board member, retired educator and chaplain, I whole-heartedly endorse this legislation and urge its passage. As someone who has lost a friend, a colleague and an extended family member to suicide, I appreciate its need.

Thank you for your public service and thoughtful consideration of this proposed legislation.

Sincerely,

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