

Calendar No. 256

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1015

To require the Federal Communications Commission to study the feasibility of designating a simple, easy-to-remember dialing code to be used for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 3, 2017

Mr. HATCH (for himself, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. UDALL, Mr. HELLER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mrs. SHAHEEN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

OCTOBER 31, 2017

Reported by Mr. THUNE, with an amendment

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

A BILL

To require the Federal Communications Commission to study the feasibility of designating a simple, easy-to-remember dialing code to be used for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “National Suicide Hot-
3 line Improvement Act of 2017”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) According to the National Center for Health
7 Statistics, suicide rates in the United States have
8 surged to their highest levels in nearly 30 years.

9 (2) The overall suicide rate rose by 24 percent
10 from 1999 to 2014.

11 (3) The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
12 (1-800-273-TALK [8255]), created under the lead-
13 ership of the Center for Mental Health Services of
14 the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
15 Administration (commonly known as “SAMHSA”),
16 is a network of 161 crisis centers that provide a toll-
17 free hotline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to anyone
18 experiencing a mental health or suicidal emergency
19 or crisis.

20 (4) In 1967, the President’s Commission on
21 Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice rec-
22 ommended the creation of a single telephone number
23 that could be used nationwide for reporting emer-
24 gencies.

25 (5) In 1968, the Federal Communications Com-
26 mission agreed upon the number 9-1-1, one of eight

1 N11 dialing codes, as a simple, easy-to-remember
 2 telephone number to be the dedicated number for re-
 3 porting emergencies, and 9-1-1 became the national
 4 emergency number for individuals in the United
 5 States to access police, fire, and ambulance services.

6 (6) Based on the success of the 9-1-1 nation-
 7 wide emergency number, a study by the Federal
 8 Communications Commission regarding the use of a
 9 simple, easy-to-remember dedicated 3-digit dialing
 10 code for a suicide prevention and mental health cri-
 11 sis hotline system would be beneficial in the preven-
 12 tion of suicide nationwide.

13 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

14 In this Act—

15 (1) the term “Assistant Secretary” means the
 16 Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Sub-
 17 stance Use;

18 (2) the term “Commission” means the Federal
 19 Communications Commission;

20 (3) the term “covered dialing code” means a
 21 simple, easy-to-remember, 3-digit dialing code; and

22 (4) the term “N11 dialing code” means an ab-
 23 breviated dialing code consisting of 3 digits, of
 24 which—

1 (A) the first digit may be any digit other
2 than “1” or “0”; and

3 (B) each of the last 2 digits is “1”.

4 **SEC. 4. FCC STUDY AND REPORT.**

5 (a) STUDY.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission, in coordi-
7 nation with the Assistant Secretary, shall conduct a
8 study that—

9 (A) examines the feasibility of designating
10 an N11 dialing code or other covered dialing
11 code to be used for a national suicide preven-
12 tion and mental health crisis hotline system;
13 and

14 (B) analyzes the effectiveness of the cur-
15 rent National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, in-
16 cluding how well the lifeline is working to ad-
17 dress the needs of veterans.

18 (2) REQUIREMENTS.—In conducting the study
19 under paragraph (1), the Commission shall—

20 (A) request that the Assistant Secretary
21 study and report to the Commission on the po-
22 tential impact of the designation of an N11 di-
23 aling code, or other covered dialing code, for a
24 suicide prevention and mental health crisis hot-
25 line system on—

1 (i) suicide prevention;
2 (ii) crisis services;
3 (iii) the National Suicide Prevention
4 Lifeline; and

5 (iv) the Veterans Crisis Line;

6 (B) consider—

7 (i) each of the N11 dialing codes, in-
8 cluding the codes that are used for other
9 purposes; and

10 (ii) other covered dialing codes;

11 (C) consult with the North American
12 Numbering Council; and

13 (D) consult with the Secretary of Veterans
14 Affairs with respect to how well the current Na-
15 tional Suicide Prevention Lifeline is working to
16 address the needs of veterans.

17 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date
18 of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall submit to
19 Congress a report on the study conducted under sub-
20 section (a) that—

21 (1) recommends a particular N11 dialing code
22 or other covered dialing code to be used for a na-
23 tional suicide prevention and mental health crisis
24 hotline system;

1 ~~(2)~~ outlines the logistics of designating such a
2 dialing code;

3 ~~(3)~~ estimates the costs associated with designating such a dialing code, including—

5 (A) the costs incurred by service providers,
6 including—

7 (i) translation changes in the network;

8 and

9 (ii) cell site analysis and reprogramming by wireless carriers; and

11 (B) the costs incurred by States and localities;

13 ~~(4)~~ provides legislative recommendations for designating such a dialing code;

15 ~~(5)~~ provides a cost-benefit analysis comparing the recommended dialing code with the current National Suicide Prevention Lifeline; and

18 ~~(6)~~ makes other recommendations for improving the national suicide prevention lifeline system generally, which may include—

21 (A) increased funding;

22 (B) increased public education and awareness; and

24 (C) improved infrastructure and operations.

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 *This Act may be cited as the “National Suicide Hot-*
 3 *line Improvement Act of 2017”.*

4 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

5 *In this Act—*

6 (1) *the term “Commission” means the Federal*
 7 *Communications Commission;*

8 (2) *the term “covered dialing code” means a sim-*
 9 *ple, easy-to-remember, 3-digit dialing code; and*

10 (3) *the term “N11 dialing code” means an abbrev-*
 11 *viated dialing code consisting of 3 digits, of which—*

12 (A) *the first digit may be any digit other*
 13 *than “1” or “0”; and*

14 (B) *each of the last 2 digits is “1”.*

15 **SEC. 3. STUDIES AND REPORTS.**

16 (a) *PRIMARY STUDY.—*

17 (1) *IN GENERAL.—The Commission, in coordina-*
 18 *tion with the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health*
 19 *and Substance Use and the Secretary of Veterans Af-*
 20 *airs, shall conduct a study that—*

21 (A) *examines the feasibility of designating*
 22 *an N11 dialing code or other covered dialing*
 23 *code to be used for a national suicide prevention*
 24 *and mental health crisis hotline system; and*

25 (B) *analyzes the effectiveness of the Na-*
 26 *tional Suicide Prevention Lifeline as of the date*

1 *on which the study is initiated, including how*
 2 *well the lifeline is working to address the needs*
 3 *of veterans.*

4 (2) *REQUIREMENTS.*—

5 (A) *COMMISSION.*—*In conducting the study*
 6 *under paragraph (1), the Commission shall—*

7 (i) *consider—*

8 (I) *each of the N11 dialing codes,*
 9 *including the codes that are used for*
 10 *other purposes; and*

11 (II) *other covered dialing codes;*

12 (ii) *consult with the North American*
 13 *Numbering Council; and*

14 (iii) *review the information provided*
 15 *by the Assistant Secretary for Mental*
 16 *Health and Substance Use and the Sec-*
 17 *retary of Veterans Affairs under subpara-*
 18 *graphs (B) and (C), respectively, of this*
 19 *paragraph.*

20 (B) *SAMHSA STUDY AND REPORT TO AS-*
 21 *SIST COMMISSION.*—*To assist the Commission in*
 22 *conducting the study under paragraph (1), the*
 23 *Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Sub-*
 24 *stance Use shall analyze and, not later than 180*

1 *days after the date of enactment of this Act, re-*
 2 *port to the Commission on—*

3 *(i) the potential impact of the designa-*
 4 *tion of an N11 dialing code, or other cov-*
 5 *ered dialing code, for a suicide prevention*
 6 *and mental health crisis hotline system*
 7 *on—*

8 *(I) suicide prevention;*

9 *(II) crisis services; and*

10 *(III) other suicide prevention and*
 11 *mental health crisis hotlines, includ-*
 12 *ing—*

13 *(aa) the National Suicide*
 14 *Prevention Lifeline; and*

15 *(bb) the Veterans Crisis Line;*
 16 *and*

17 *(ii) possible recommendations for im-*
 18 *proving the National Suicide Prevention*
 19 *Lifeline generally, which may include—*

20 *(I) increased public education and*
 21 *awareness; and*

22 *(II) improved infrastructure and*
 23 *operations.*

24 *(C) VA STUDY AND REPORT TO ASSIST COM-*
 25 *MISSION.—To assist the Commission in con-*

ducting the study under paragraph (1), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall study and, not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, report to the Commission on how well the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and the Veterans Crisis Line, as in effect on the date on which the study is initiated, is working to address the needs of veterans.

(b) *PRIMARY COMMISSION REPORT.*—

(1) *IN GENERAL.*—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, shall submit a report on the study conducted under subsection (a) that recommends whether a particular N11 dialing code or other covered dialing code should be used for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system to—

(A) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate; and

(C) the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives.

1 (2) *ADDITIONAL CONTENTS.—If the report sub-*
2 *mitted by the Commission under paragraph (1) rec-*
3 *ommends that a dialing code should be used, the re-*
4 *port shall also—*

5 *(A) outline the logistics of designating such*
6 *a dialing code;*

7 *(B) estimate the costs associated with desig-*
8 *nating such a dialing code, including—*

9 *(i) the costs incurred by service pro-*
10 *viders, including—*

11 *(I) translation changes in the net-*
12 *work; and*

13 *(II) cell site analysis and re-*
14 *programming by wireless carriers; and*

15 *(ii) the costs incurred by States and lo-*
16 *calities;*

17 *(C) provide recommendations for desig-*
18 *nating such a dialing code;*

19 *(D) provide a cost-benefit analysis com-*
20 *paring the recommended dialing code with the*
21 *National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, as in effect*
22 *on the date on which the report is submitted;*
23 *and*

- 1 *(E) make other recommendations, as appro-*
2 *priate, for improving the National Suicide Pre-*
3 *vention Lifeline generally, which may include—*
4 *(i) increased public education and*
5 *awareness; and*
6 *(ii) improved infrastructure and oper-*
7 *ations.*

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