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NATIONAL SUICIDE HOTLINE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2018

JULY 18, 2018.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. WALDEN, from the Committee on Energy and Commerce, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 2345]

The Committee on Energy and Commerce, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 2345) 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, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with an amendment and recommend that the bill as amended do pass.

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The amendment is as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2018".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act—

(1) the term "Commission" means the Federal Communications Commission;

(2) the term "covered dialing code" means a simple, easy-to-remember, 3-digit dialing code; and

(3) the term "N11 dialing code" means an abbreviated dialing code consisting of 3 digits, of which—

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

(B) each of the last 2 digits is "1".

SEC. 3. STUDIES AND REPORTS.

(a) PRIMARY STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, shall conduct a study that—

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

(B) analyzes the effectiveness of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline as of the date on which the study is initiated, including how well the lifeline is working to address the needs of veterans.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—

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

(i) consider—

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

(II) other covered dialing codes;

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

(iii) review the information provided by the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under subparagraphs (B) and (C), respectively, of this paragraph.

(B) SAMHSA STUDY AND REPORT TO ASSIST COMMISSION.—To assist the Commission in conducting the study under paragraph (1), the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use shall analyze and, not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, report to the Commission on—

(i) the potential impact of the designation of an N11 dialing code, or other covered dialing code, for a suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system on—

(I) suicide prevention;

(II) crisis services; and

(III) other suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotlines, including—

(aa) the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline; and

(bb) the Veterans Crisis Line; and

(ii) possible recommendations for improving the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline generally, which may include—

(I) increased public education and awareness; and

(II) improved infrastructure and operations.

(C) VA STUDY AND REPORT TO ASSIST COMMISSION.—To assist the Commission in conducting 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;

(C) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate;
(D) the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives; and
(E) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.
(2) ADDITIONAL CONTENTS.—If the report submitted by the Commission under paragraph (1) recommends that a dialing code should be used, the report shall also—
(A) outline the logistics of designating such a dialing code;
(B) estimate the costs associated with designating such a dialing code, including—
(i) the costs incurred by service providers, including—
(I) translation changes in the network; and
(II) cell site analysis and reprogramming by wireless carriers; and
(ii) the costs incurred by States and localities;
(C) provide recommendations for designating such a dialing code;
(D) provide a cost-benefit analysis comparing the recommended dialing code with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, as in effect on the date on which the report is submitted; and
(E) make other recommendations, as appropriate, for improving the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline generally, which may include—
(i) increased public education and awareness; and
(ii) improved infrastructure and operations.

PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

H.R. 2345, National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2018, was introduced on May 3, 2017, by Representative Chris Stewart (R–UT). H.R. 2345 would require the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to coordinate with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) and the Department of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study that examines the feasibility of designating an N11 dialing code to be used for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, suicide rates in the United States have surged to their highest levels in nearly 30 years. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15–19 year olds, and over 44,000 Americans die by suicide each year.

In an effort to provide free resources to those experiencing a mental health crisis, SAMHSA launched the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline in 2005. Today, the Lifeline is a network of over 160 crisis centers that provide free and confidential support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Some have suggested that creating a 3-digit dialing code for a national suicide prevention hotline would make it easier for those experiencing a mental health crisis or suicidal thoughts to seek help.

COMMITTEE ACTION

On March 22, 2018, the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing on H.R. 2345. The Subcommittee received testimony from:

- Tim Donovan, Senior Vice President, Legislative Affairs, Competitive Carriers Association;
- David Donovan, President and Executive Director, New York State Broadcasters Association, Inc.;
- Robert Gessner, President, MCTV;

• John Madigan, Vice President and Chief Public Policy Officer, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention; and
• Sarah Morris, Director of Open Internet Policy, Open Technology Institute, New America Foundation.

On June 13, 2018, the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology met in open markup session and forwarded H.R. 2345, as amended, to the full Committee by a voice vote. On July 12, 2018, the full Committee on Energy and Commerce met in open markup session and ordered H.R. 2345, as amended, favorably reported to the House by a voice vote.

COMMITTEE VOTES

Clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires the Committee to list the record votes on the motion to report legislation and amendments thereto. There were no recorded votes taken in connection with ordering H.R. 2345 reported.

OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee held a hearing and made findings that are reflected in this report.

NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY, ENTITLEMENT AUTHORITY, AND TAX EXPENDITURES

In compliance with clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee finds that H.R. 2345 would result in no new or increased budget authority, entitlement authority, or tax expenditures or revenues.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE ESTIMATE

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, at the time this report was filed, the cost estimate prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 was not available.

FEDERAL MANDATES STATEMENT

The Committee adopts as its own the estimate of Federal mandates prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

STATEMENT OF GENERAL PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII, the general performance goal or objective of this legislation is to conduct a study that examines the feasibility of designating an N11 dialing code to be used for a national suicide prevention hotline.

DUPLICATION OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

No provision of H.R. 2345 establishes or reauthorizes a program of the Federal Government known to be duplicative of another Federal program, a program that was included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111–139, or a program related to a program identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.

COMMITTEE COST ESTIMATE

The Committee adopts as its own the cost estimate prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974. At the time this report was filed, the estimate was not available.

EARMARK, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, AND LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Pursuant to clause 9(e), 9(f), and 9(g) of rule XXI, the Committee finds that H.R. 2345 contains no earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits.

DISCLOSURE OF DIRECTED RULE MAKINGS

Pursuant to section 3(i) of H. Res. 5, the Committee finds that H.R. 2345 contains no directed rule makings.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE STATEMENT

No advisory committees within the meaning of section 5(b) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act were created by this legislation.

APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS OF THE LEGISLATION

Section 1. Short title

Section 1 provides that the Act may be cited as the "National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2018."

Section 2. Definitions

Section 2 defines several terms in the Act, including "Commission," "covered dialing code," and "N11 dialing code."

Section 3. Studies and reports

Section 3 requires the FCC, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary for SAMHSA and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, to conduct a study that examines the feasibility of designating a N11 dialing code to be used for a national suicide prevention hotline and that analyzes the effectiveness of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. In conducting the study, the FCC shall consider each of the N11 dialing codes, other covered dialing codes, and the information provided by SAMHSA and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. The section also requires SAMHSA to issue a study and report to the FCC on the potential impact of a N11 dialing code and possible recommendations for improving the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. The section also requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to report to the FCC on how well the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and the Veterans Crisis Line is working to address the needs of veterans. Finally, the section requires the FCC to submit a report to Congress that recommends whether a N11 dialing code should be used for a national suicide prevention hotline.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

This legislation does not amend any existing Federal statute.

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