

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 11, 2026

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

We write to urge the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to take immediate, concrete steps to restart specialized services for LGBTQ+ youth within the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, ensuring these services are fully operational no later than February 28, 2026.

The Fiscal Year 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill directs HHS to support the 988 Lifeline's Press 3 specialized services at a congressionally directed funding level of \$33.1 million. This funding reflects bipartisan, Congressional recognition that tailored crisis support for populations at higher risk of suicide, including LGBTQ+ youth, is not optional; it is essential.

In prior responses to Members of Congress regarding this issue, you have stated that HHS "is committed to supporting mental health and reducing suicide in communities across the nation." Inhibiting Press 3 services undermines that commitment, Congressional intent, and best practices for suicide prevention.

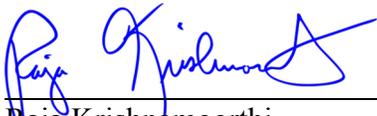
HHS under numerous administrations has found that LGBTQ+ youth face disproportionately high rates of mental health distress and suicidality.¹ Since its launch, the LGBTQ+ youth 988 service has supported nearly 1.6 million calls, texts, and chats, and has recently averaged approximately 2,100 contacts per day. These numbers underscore the ongoing and urgent need for competent, specialized crisis intervention. For a young person feeling isolated or unsafe, access to a trained counselor who understands their lived experience can be the difference between life and death.

When Congress established the 988 Lifeline, signed into law during President Trump's first term, it was intended to be a resource for any American experiencing mental distress. Specialized services for high-risk populations, including LGBTQ+ youth and veterans, are a core part of fulfilling that mission. Allowing these services to remain discontinued poses serious risks and does not align with your department's commitment to improving health outcomes nationwide.

HHS must honor Congressional direction, uphold the department's stated commitment to suicide prevention, and immediately restart the LGBTQ+ youth specialized services within the 988 Lifeline by the end of this month. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

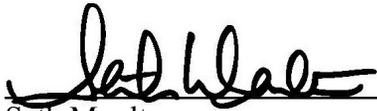
¹ "Health Disparities Among LGBTQ Youth." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, Division of Adolescent and School Health, 2023, www.cdc.gov/healthy-youth/lgbtq-youth/health-disparities-among-lgbtq-youth.html.



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



Brian K. Fitzpatrick
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