

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 2nd, 2025

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

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

We are writing to express our concern regarding reports that the Department of Health and Human Services budget request for fiscal year 2026 would eliminate the Specialized Services for LGBTQ+ youth within the 988 Suicide Prevention and Crisis Lifeline.

We firmly believe in parents' rights, and think they must play a significant role in this process, but we cannot leave our children without critical mental health care.

As you may know, the 988 Lifeline is a suicide and crisis hotline offering 24/7 support via voice, text, and chat in both English and Spanish. In September 2022, a specialized pilot program was introduced to address the unique mental health needs of LGBTQ+ youth, which expanded to 24/7 availability by March 2023. Since its launch, this specialized service has received over 1.3 million calls, texts, and chats, with an average of 2,100 contacts per day as of February 2025.¹

The reported HHS budget draft would eliminate this specialized lifeline, leaving many LGBTQ+ youth without a compassionate voice in moments of profound distress. In 2021, a CDC study found that 45% of high school students who seriously considered attempting suicide identified as LGBTQ+. ² These are real, vulnerable young people who urgently need access to mental health care.

Eliminating these support systems would be a devastating setback, stripping away a critical resource for youth already at elevated risk. It would also likely result in increased emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and long-term mental health consequences—placing further strain on our healthcare system and families alike.

We urge you to ensure that the necessary personnel and funding remain in place to continue the lifesaving work of the 988 Lifeline's Specialized Services for LGBTQ+ youth. Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued commitment to supporting the health and well-being of American families. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


Michael V. Lawler
Member of Congress


Young Kim
Member of Congress

1. Lurie, Julia, Julia Métraux, Jamilah King, Sarah Szilagy, Laura C. Morel, Henry Carnell, Artis Curiskis, et al. 2025. "HHS Plans to Cut the National Suicide Hotline's Program for LGBTQ Youth – Mother Jones." Mother Jones. <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2025/04/national-suicide-hotline-lgbtq-youth-cuts-rfk-jr-hhs/>.
2. Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Accessed April 23, 2025. https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/YRBS_Data-Summary-Trends_Report2023_508.pdf.