

February 19, 2021

Dear House Health and Human Services Committee Members,

My name is Jeff and I am writing to you today to voice my support for HB2281 - Establishing and implementing 988 as the suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline in Kansas.

My wife and I lost our 27 year old son, David, to suicide almost 9 years ago. Since that tragic day, we do everything we can to prevent another family from ever experiencing such a heartbreaking loss. If we can save one person, one family, one community, it is worth the effort we take.

I was so thrilled to hear about the new federal legislation that implements 988 as the new National Suicide Prevention Lifeline phone number. This legislation will most definitely help to save lives. We, the State of Kansas, must now do our part to help support this lifesaving legislation and the funding necessary to insure that there will always be someone at the other end of the line when perhaps, you, me or one of our family members is reaching out for help. Fifty cents a month, \$6 a year is a very small price to pay to have that help when needed.

Some may ask why this is so important to our communities, and when I say communities, I mean urban, suburban, and rural. The reason this is so important for us to act on now is that more than ever, mental health is becoming a vital and important part of our overall health. We are finally gaining ground on the stigma that prevents so many of us from reaching out when we need that help. Having easier and more readily available help in a time of crisis is critical to saving lives and giving those who may be struggling hope.

Please support HB2281, and let's do everything we can to bring hope to our families and neighbors.

If there is anyway I may be of assistance in the future, I am available.

Sincerely,
Jeff Cardwell
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