**Submit your letter to the Assembly Appropriations Committee through the California Legislature Position Letter Portal (**[**https://calegislation.lc.ca.gov/Advocates/**](https://calegislation.lc.ca.gov/Advocates/))

**PLEASE SUBMIT LETTERS OF SUPPORT BY FRIDAY, MAY 7 AT NOON**

[INSERT DATE]

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez, Chair

Assembly Appropriations Committee

California State Capitol, Room 2114

Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 988 (Bauer-Kahan) The Miles Hall Lifeline Act – SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Gonzalez:

I write to express strong support for Assembly Bill 988, known as the Miles Hall Lifeline Act, to implement the national 988 mental health emergency response system in California so that everyone experiencing a mental health crisis can access life-saving care.

In October of 2020, both chambers of Congress unanimously passed, and the President signed historic legislation, the [National Suicide and Mental Health Crisis Hotline Designation Act](https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/2661/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22National+Suicide+Hotline+Designation+Act+of+2019%22%5D%7D&r=2&s=1), establishing a new phone line (988) for suicide prevention and immediate mental health crisis response nationwide. Before July 2022, when 988 goes live, states must create a framework to receive and respond to calls.

**This new emergency response system, which would be implemented in California through AB 988, will connect callers with around-the-clock intervention, including mobile crisis support teams staffed by mental health professionals and trained peers instead of police officers.**

Our dysfunctional and disjointed mental health crisis response system relies on law enforcement and confinement and puts people suffering from mental illness through an expensive and traumatizing revolving-door as they shuttle between jails, emergency rooms, and the streets.

AB 988 creates a comprehensive crisis response system that can help break this cycle, save money, and increase access to the right kind of care.

**AB 988 provides California with an unprecedented opportunity to leverage funds to transform our mental health crisis response system, save lives, and create significant cost savings to the state and local governments; AB 988:**

1. Includes a user fee on access lines to fund the critical infrastructure of the 988 system;
2. Draws down on federal reimbursement rates and grants to offset costs to the state and local governments;
3. Builds upon existing investments and makes use of recently enacted parity legislation (SB 855, 2020) to link and expand our existing crisis response system while keeping the user fee low for Californians; and
4. Offers a significant return on investments as high as $7 to $1 in law enforcement, EMS, and hospital savings.

AB 988 enjoys bi-partisan co-authorship from one quarter of the Legislature. The bill is also supported by a wide range of consumer advocates, health care providers, and others including the National Union of Health Care Workers, the National Association of Social Workers, the City of San Diego, NAMI of California, Mental Health America of California, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, California Psychological Association, and the California Pan-Ethnic Health Network as well as more than 2,500 hundred individuals.

[Please include information about why you support AB 988. Choose up to three of the strongest points that support your position and state them clearly. Include a personal story. Tell your representative why the issue is important to you and how it affects you, your family member and your community.]

California has an extraordinary opportunity to transform our mental health crisis response system, without typical cost pressures -- in fact, AB 988 will create profound cost savings for the state and local governments. More than simple cost savings, AB 988 will save countless lives by expanding access to vital mental health resources all through one easy-to-remember three-digit number.

For these reasons, I proudly support AB 988 and respectfully request your strong support when it comes before your committee.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Street address]  
[City, State, Zip code]