

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN

AGN. NO.
July 15, 2025

Preserving Suicide Prevention Support for LGBTQ+ Residents in Los Angeles County Amid the Federal Directive to Eliminate Funding for the Specialized Press 3 Option of 988 for LGBTQ+ Youth Callers

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (988) went live across the United States in July 2022, providing an easy-to-remember number so people in crisis could access mental health and suicide prevention support via call centers that operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Since then, 988 utilization has increased, answer rates have improved, and wait times have fallen. People across the nation are using this essential resource, which is undoubtedly saving lives. And in March of 2023, 988 expanded its services so that LGBTQ+ specialized services were made available for youth under 25. LGBTQ+ youth now have 24/7 text and phone access to LGBTQ+-affirming counseling by calling 988 and pressing option 3 for LGBTQ+-specific services.

Having a specific option for LGBTQ+ youth in crisis to receive specialized services through 988 is not only the right thing to do, but it is also essential for preserving lives. LGBTQ youth experience a higher risk of suicidality, not because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, but because of how they are mistreated and stigmatized by others.¹ In fact, LGBTQ+ youth are over four times more likely to attempt suicide than

¹ <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/article/facts-about-lgbtq-youth-suicide/>

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their peers, and the a recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that looked at ten years of data found that 65% of LGBTQ+ youth self-reported feeling persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness compared to 31% of cisgender and heterosexual youth.² Many LGBTQ+ youth lack access to affirming spaces and deal with parental rejection, which increase chances of them experiencing depression and attempting suicide. While more must be done to ensure LGBTQ+ youth experience various protective factors, like enhancing affirming spaces in schools, respecting pronouns, and providing gender-affirming care, having a Lifeline specifically for LGBTQ+ youth in crisis is also essential.

Vibrant Emotional Health is the national administrator for routing all 988 calls nationwide, including routing calls to LGBTQ+ services when callers press option 3. Various organizations that specialize in LGBTQ+ counseling, including the Trevor Project, receive calls routed from 988 via option 3 and provide over-the-phone counseling specifically for LGBTQ+ youth. And Didi Hirsch is the 988 call center operator for Los Angeles County. These three non-governmental organizations receive federal funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to accept and route calls and texts to 988 so that people in crisis get the help that they need when they need it. Didi Hirsch also receives funding directly from the State of California to operate their 988 call centers.

In April, a leaked budget proposal revealed the Trump administration's desire to cut funding for specialized services for LGBTQ+ youth who call the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. This proposal was actualized when the SAMHSA announced on June 24, 2025, that it would be ending funding for these specialized services for LGBTQ+ youth on July

² <https://www.cdc.gov/yrbbs/dstr/pdf/YRBS-2023-Data-Summary-Trend-Report.pdf>

17, 2025. That means starting July 17, funding will be eliminated for callers to press 3 after calling 988 and get routed to the Trevor Project's call line to receive counseling specific to LGBTQ+ youth. This cut in funding is devastating to a population that is especially vulnerable. LA County needs to fully understand the impact of this SAMHSA announcement and find a way to continue providing specialty services for LGBTQ+ youth through 988.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors do the following:

1. Direct the Chief Executive Office Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations (CEO-LAIR), in collaboration with the Department of Mental Health, to report back, in writing, in 15 days on the impact of the federal directive to eliminate funding and resources for the specialized "press three" option for LGBTQ+ youth within the 988 hotline; and
2. Direct the Department of Mental Health to collaborate with Didi Hirsch, the Trevor Project, and Vibrant Emotional Health to explore options to continue providing linkages between Los Angeles County's 988 hotline and the Trevor project hotline for LGBTQ+ youth, and report back in writing in 30 days with options.

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