



9 August 2022

Hon. Carolyn Bennett  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Bennett,

On 16 July 2022, the United States of America adopted a National 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. An emergency number that has been designed and proven to work by numerous studies to help save the lives of people who may be in a crisis. While the House of Commons has approved a motion to adopt such a number, it has been over 606 days since this motion was adopted and 190 days since the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission concluded the national consultation about a 3-digit phone number for suicide prevention. As many as 6700 Canadians may have taken their life during this time.

Within Canada on a daily basis, about 11 people take their own life from suicide. With suicide being the leading cause of death for individuals between the ages of 15 to 34, Indigenous rates of suicide as high as 9 times non-Indigenous peers, and LGBTQ youth at 14 times more risk of suicide than straight counterparts, the implementation and continued promotion of a national 988 suicide and crisis lifeline in Canada needs to continue to be a national priority.

With myself having attempted suicide, as well as through dozens of conversations that I have had with members of the Hamilton and Ottawa communities, I have seen and know firsthand how such a number will only prove to be beneficial to working to save lives and assisting people who are in distress. A 3-digit number that can be easily accessed through either phone call or text message depending on the preference of the individual and that connects individuals with a crisis responder from no matter where they are in Canada. A number that will provide access to support services faster as individuals will not be required to search for and/or remember a 10-digit number before being able to access support.

I continue to urge you, and all of your colleagues in the House of Commons, to work together to ensure that a 3-digit suicide prevention and crisis lifeline number is implemented within Canada as soon as possible. The lives of every single Canadian and every Canadian in crisis depend on being able to access fast, secure, and supportive services, which such a number will be able to provide.

Sincerely in hope of action,

Joshua Michael J. Bell

*Community & Mental Health Advocate*

CC: All Hamilton Area MPs