

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4974

To amend the Communications Act of 1934 to improve the accessibility of 9–8–8, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 27, 2023

Mr. CÁRDENAS (for himself, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. KUSTER, and Mr. MOULTON) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To amend the Communications Act of 1934 to improve the accessibility of 9–8–8, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Local 9–8–8 Response
5 Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. 9–8–8 IMPROVEMENT.**

7 (a) PROXIMITY-BASED ROUTING.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after
9 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commis-
10 sion shall promulgate regulations to ensure that

1 each phone call, text message, and chat made or
2 sent to 9–8–8 is routed to the participating crisis
3 center that is closest to the geographic area from
4 which such phone call, text message, or chat origi-
5 nated.

6 (2) LIMITATION.—In promulgating regulations
7 under paragraph (1), the Commission shall protect
8 the privacy of individuals who contact 9–8–8 by en-
9 suring that a call, text message, or chat made or
10 sent to 9–8–8 does not reveal the precise location of
11 the individual who made or sent such call, text mes-
12 sage, or chat.

13 (b) TRANSMISSION OF ALL CALLS AND TEXTS.—Not
14 later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this
15 Act, the Commission shall promulgate regulations to en-
16 sure that each provider of commercial mobile service
17 transmits all calls and text messages made or sent to 9–
18 8–8, including a call or text message that originates from
19 a non-service-initialized handset (if such call or text mes-
20 sage originates on a phone using a compliant radio fre-
21 quency protocol of the provider).

22 (c) CONFIGURATION OF MULTI-LINE TELEPHONE
23 SYSTEMS FOR DIRECT DIALING.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 721 of the Commu-
25 nications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 623) is amended—

1 (A) in the section heading, by inserting
2 “**AND 9-8-8**” after “**9-1-1**”;

3 (B) in subsection (a), by inserting “and 9-
4 8-8” after “9-1-1”; and

5 (C) in subsection (b), by inserting “and 9-
6 8-8” after “9-1-1”.

7 (2) APPLICABILITY.—

8 (A) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made
9 by paragraph (1) shall apply to actions occur-
10 ring on and after the date that is 2 years after
11 the date of the enactment of this Act.

12 (B) EXCEPTION.—The amendment made
13 by paragraph (1)(C) shall not apply to the
14 management or operation of a multi-line tele-
15 phone system installed before the date that is 2
16 years after the date of the enactment of this
17 Act, if such system is not able to be configured
18 to satisfy the requirements of such amendment,
19 without an improvement to the hardware or
20 software of the system.

21 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

22 (1) 9-8-8.—The term “9-8-8” means 9-8-8,
23 as designated as the universal telephone number
24 within the United States for the purpose of the na-
25 tional suicide prevention and mental health crisis

1 hotline system under section 251(e)(4) of the Com-
2 munications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 251(e)(4)).

3 (2) COMMERCIAL MOBILE SERVICE.—The term
4 “commercial mobile service” has the meaning given
5 such term in section 332(d) of the Communications
6 Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 332(d)).

7 (3) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission”
8 means the Federal Communications Commission.

9 (4) NON-SERVICE-INITIALIZED HANDSET.—The
10 term “non-service-initialized handset” has the mean-
11 ing given that term in section 9.10(o)(3)(i) of title
12 47, Code of Federal Regulations.

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