

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 1570

To facilitate nationwide accessibility and coordination of 211 services and 988 services in order to provide information and referral to all residents and visitors in the United States for mental health emergencies, homelessness needs, other social and human services needs, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 11, 2021

Mr. CASEY (for himself, Mr. MORAN, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. KELLY, and Ms. BALDWIN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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## A BILL

To facilitate nationwide accessibility and coordination of 211 services and 988 services in order to provide information and referral to all residents and visitors in the United States for mental health emergencies, homelessness needs, other social and human services needs, 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,*

1   **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2       This Act may be cited as the “Human-services Emer-  
3   gency Logistic Program Act of 2021” or the “HELP Act  
4   of 2021”.

5   **SEC. 2. PURPOSES.**

6       The purposes of this Act are as follows:

7           (1) To strengthen the existing 211 services and  
8       to coordinate 211 and 988 services in States  
9       throughout the Nation.

10          (2) To increase the availability, reliability, and  
11       responsiveness of 211 and 988 services, and improve  
12       information and referral through 211 and 988 serv-  
13       ices, across the country, 24 hours a day, 365 days  
14       a year.

15          (3) To reduce the use of 911 services for cir-  
16       cumstances not related to law enforcement, fire, or  
17       medical emergencies.

18          (4) To more efficiently connect individuals with  
19       mental health services and other needed human serv-  
20       ices.

21          (5) To reduce the arrests, incarcerations, and  
22       violent interactions between law enforcement and in-  
23       dividuals that sometimes occur from inappropriate  
24       911 emergency referrals.

1   **SEC. 3. ALLOTMENTS TO STRENGTHEN NATIONWIDE AC-**  
2                   **CESSIBILITY AND COORDINATION OF 211 AND**  
3                   **988 SERVICES FOR INFORMATION AND RE-**  
4                   **FERRAL FOR HUMAN SERVICES AND MENTAL**  
5                   **HEALTH NEEDS.**

6       (a) IN GENERAL.—Out of amounts appropriated  
7 under section 4(a) that remain after application of section  
8 4(b), the Secretary of Health and Human Services (re-  
9 ferred to in this Act as the “Secretary”), acting through  
10 the Human Services National Board, shall make an allot-  
11 ment to each State, in accordance with the formula devel-  
12 oped under subsection (b), to carry out a program for the  
13 purposes of—

14                  (1) ensuring 211 and 988 services are directly  
15 accessible to all individuals in each State;

16                  (2) ensuring capacity within each State for 988  
17 services through the operational support of State  
18 designated crisis centers within the National Suicide  
19 Prevention Lifeline Network;

20                  (3) strengthening the reliability, accessibility,  
21 and responsiveness of methods of communication  
22 through 211 and 988 services, in order to provide  
23 information and referrals with respect to human  
24 services provided through the respective 211 or 988  
25 services, including mental health emergency re-  
26 sources and suicide prevention resources provided

1       through 988 services, homelessness resources, do-  
2       mestic violence resources, resources to identify and  
3       address child, adult, and elder abuse and exploi-  
4       tation, caregiver and child care resources, and other  
5       human service needs provided through 211 services;  
6       and

7                 (4) reducing law enforcement interactions with  
8       people with disabilities and individuals experiencing  
9       human-services or mental health needs, and increas-  
10      ing the capacity to divert calls from 911 or police  
11      departments to mental health and human services  
12      responders, as appropriate.

13                 (b) ALLOTMENTS TO STATES.—

14                 (1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of making al-  
15       lotments under this section, the Secretary shall de-  
16       velop a formula for determining the allotment  
17       amounts for each State. Such formula shall be based  
18       on population, population density, poverty rate, and  
19       other evidence-based predictive data related to the  
20       needs of the State for, and access to, mental health  
21       and other human services. Allotments made under  
22       this section, and the services provided through such  
23       allotments, shall not supplant funding otherwise  
24       made available to the State for such purposes, or

1       services otherwise provided by the State for such  
2       purposes.

3                 (2) NON-FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS.—A State  
4       may not be eligible for an allotment under this sec-  
5       tion unless the State ensures that at least 25 per-  
6       cent of the resources of the program funded by the  
7       State allotment will be derived from non-Federal  
8       sources, which may include in-kind contributions of  
9       goods or services.

10                (3) REQUIREMENT REGARDING STATE ALLOT-  
11       MENT AMOUNTS.—Of the amounts allotted to a  
12       State under this section, not more than 15 percent  
13       shall be allocated for evaluation, training, and tech-  
14       nical assistance, and for management and adminis-  
15       tration of subgrants awarded under this section.

16                (4) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—From the allot-  
17       ment made to a State under this subsection, the  
18       State Human Services Collaborative may retain the  
19       greater of  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 1 percent of such allotment or  
20       \$50,000, for administrative costs.

21               (c) HUMAN SERVICES NATIONAL BOARD.—

22                (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish  
23       a Human Services National Board for purposes of—

- 1                             (A) managing and allocating funds under  
2                             this section, including making allotments to  
3                             States;
- 4                             (B) reviewing State plans for implementing  
5                             and maintaining 211 systems and coordinating  
6                             the 211 and 988 systems;
- 7                             (C) evaluating State 211 and 988 systems,  
8                             including with respect to capacity for answering  
9                             and responding to calls; and
- 10                           (D) evaluating the coordination and col-  
11                             laboration among 211, 988, and 911 services  
12                             and other emergency and call center systems.

13                           (2) MEMBERSHIP.—

14                           (A) IN GENERAL.—The Human Services  
15                             National Board shall be comprised of not fewer  
16                             than 19 members selected by the Secretary in  
17                             accordance with subparagraph (B), of which 11  
18                             shall be permanent members, and 8 shall serve  
19                             3-year, rotating terms.

20                           (B) MEMBERS.—

21                           (i) PERMANENT MEMBERS.—The 11  
22                             permanent members shall be comprised of  
23                             one representative from each of—

24                           (I) the Alliance of Information  
25                             and Referral Systems;



(I) 1 representative of a faith-based organization dedicated to providing human services;

(II) 1 representative of an organization dedicated to ensuring racial and ethnic equity;

(III) 1 representative of a disability organization operated by a majority of people with disabilities;

(IV) 1 representative of an organization representing older adults;

(V) 1 representative of an organization representing Tribal and Native peoples;

(VI) 1 representative of an organization representing LGBTQ+ populations;

(VII) 1 representative of a secular organization dedicated to providing human services; and

(VIII) 1 representative of a law enforcement labor or representative organization

(iii) ADDITIONAL ROTATING MEMBERS.—In addition to the members ap-

1 pointed under clauses (i) and (ii), the Sec-  
2 retary may appoint to the Human Services  
3 National Board up to 4 additional rotating  
4 members to represent specific populations  
5 or issues. Each such member shall serve a  
6 3-year term.

11 (I) the Department of Health  
12 and Human Services;

15 (III) the Department of Home-  
16 land Security;

17 (IV) the Department of Housing  
18 and Urban Development;

19 (V) the Department of Com-  
20 merce; and

21 (VI) the Department of Labor.

(3) FISCAL AGENT.—The Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall be the fiscal agent of the Human Services National Board.

25 (4) CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR.—

12 (d) STATE OVERSIGHT ENTITIES.—

13 (1) HUMAN SERVICES COLLABORATIVES.—

(II) collaborates, to the extent practicable, with the entities listed in clause (ii); and

13 (III) collaborates with the Adminis-  
14 trator of the National Suicide Prevention  
15 Lifeline to coordinate 988 operations with  
16 211 operations in the State; or

(I) an informal, existing statewide collaborative in the State;

(II) crisis centers within the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Network operating in the State;

25 (III) State agencies;

(IV) community-based organizations, including—

3 (aa) organizations rep-  
4 resenting older adults;

5 (bb) organizations rep-  
6 resenting people with disabilities;

(cc) where appropriate, organizations representing Native peoples and Tribal nations;

10 (dd) organizations rep-  
11 resenting people with mental  
12 health disabilities; and

17 (V) faith-based organizations  
18 dedicated to providing human serv-  
19 ices;

(VI) nonprofit organizations providing human services;

(VII) comprehensive and specialized information and referral providers, including area agencies on

1 aging, aging and disability resource  
2 centers, and 211 and 988 call centers;

(VIII) State and regional foundations;

5 (IX) businesses headquartered in,  
6 or with significant presence in, the  
7 State; and

(X) law enforcement labor or representative organizations representing rank and file officers.

11                   (2) HUMAN SERVICES STATE OVERSIGHT COUN-  
12                   CIL.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Each State receiving an allotment under this section shall establish a Human Services State Oversight Council (referred to in this section as a “Council”) to provide guidance and oversight of the 211 and 988 systems to the State Human Services Collaborative.

20 (B) MEMBERS.—

(I) at least 3 representatives of

human service providers;

(II) at least 2 adults over the age

of 60;

(III) at least 3 people with disabilities;

(IV) at least 3 additional people

with mental health disabilities;

(V) at least 1 individual with a

child under 18 years of age;

(VI) at least 1 individual caring

for an older adult;

(VII) at least 1 individual proposing support for a relative with a disability;

(VIII) at least 3 individuals who are members of a family that receives means tested Federal benefits, such as temporary assistance for needy families under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.), the supplemental nutrition assistance program established under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.), or the supple-

1                   mental security income program es-  
2                   tablished under title XVI of the Social  
3                   Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1381 et seq.);

4                   (IX) at least 1 business rep-  
5                   resentative; and

6                   (X) at least 1 representative of a  
7                   law enforcement labor or representa-  
8                   tive organization.

9                   (ii) CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.—No  
10                  Council member may be an employee of an  
11                  entity that receives a subgrant from the  
12                  State Human Services Collaborative.

13                  (iii) CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR.—With  
14                  respect to each Council, the Council shall  
15                  select from among its members a Chair,  
16                  who shall be a recipient of human services,  
17                  and a Vice Chair, who shall be a provider  
18                  of human services or a business represent-  
19                  ative.

20                  (C) DUTIES.—Each Council shall be re-  
21                  sponsible for—

22                  (i) reviewing the annual State applica-  
23                  tion to the Human Services National  
24                  Board;

(ii) reviewing the annual Human Services Collaborative budget;

7 (iv) monitoring the State 211 and 988  
8 services to ensure that such services are  
9 racially equitable; and

10 (v) making recommendations to in-  
11 crease the awareness and effectiveness of  
12 211 and 988 services in all parts and com-  
13 munities of the State.

14       (e) APPLICATION.—The Human Services Collaborative  
15      of a State, on behalf of each State seeking an allocation  
16      under this section, acting under the direction of the  
17      State governor, shall submit an annual application to the  
18      Human Services National Board for such an allocation,  
19      at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require, including the following:

22 (1) A description of how the Human Services  
23 Collaborative will—

- 1                         (A) ensure that every resident of the State  
2                         with phone or internet service can connect to  
3                         the 211 and 988 services at no charge;
- 4                         (B) make available, throughout the State,  
5                         211 and 988 service information and referral  
6                         with respect to human services, including infor-  
7                         mation about the manner in which the Human  
8                         Services Collaborative will develop, sustain, and  
9                         evaluate the State's 211 and 988 services and  
10                         ensure sufficient State capacity for answering  
11                         and responding to calls to 988;
- 12                         (C) coordinate with 911 systems and law  
13                         enforcement agencies to divert calls to mental  
14                         health and human services responders who can  
15                         assist individuals and link individuals with vol-  
16                         untary, community-based services, as appro-  
17                         priate;
- 18                         (D) use annual 211 and 988 operational  
19                         data to inform the Collaborative's approach to  
20                         assessing the program and establishing over-  
21                         sight metrics.
- 22                         (2) Information on the sources of funding and  
23                         other resources for the State 211 and 988 services  
24                         for purposes of meeting the requirements under sub-  
25                         section (b)(2).

1                             (3) Information describing how the Human  
2                             Services Collaborative will provide to all individuals  
3                             in the State, to the extent practicable, a statewide  
4                             database available via the internet, that will allow  
5                             such individuals to search for programs or services  
6                             that are available from mental health and human  
7                             services providers in the State.

8                             (4) Assurances that all activities and informa-  
9                             tion provided by the 211 and 988 services and all  
10                            entities receiving subgrants pursuant to this section  
11                             will be directly accessible according to the Americans  
12                             with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et  
13                             seq.), section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973  
14                             (29 U.S.C. 794d), and part 1194 of title 36, Code  
15                             of Federal Regulations (or any successor regula-  
16                             tions).

17                             (5) Any additional information the Secretary  
18                             may require.

19                             (f) SUBGRANTS.—

20                             (1) AUTHORITY.—For purposes of carrying out  
21                             a program in a State, the State Human Services  
22                             Collaborative may make subgrants to such entities  
23                             as the Collaborative determines appropriate, which  
24                             may include subgrants to provide funds—

- 1                         (A) for the provision of 211 and 988 serv-  
2                         ices;  
3                         (B) for the operation and maintenance of  
4                         211 and 988 call centers;  
5                         (C) for the collection and display of infor-  
6                         mation in the statewide database;  
7                         (D) for increasing public awareness of 211  
8                         and 988 services in the State in collaboration  
9                         with 911 services and other emergency call cen-  
10                        ters;  
11                        (E) for coordination of the State's 211 and  
12                        988 services, including the collection, accessi-  
13                        bility, and display of information through a na-  
14                        tional data platform;  
15                        (F) to conduct statewide and regional  
16                        planning for 211 and 988 services;  
17                        (G) for start-up costs of extending 211 and  
18                        988 services to unserved areas, including costs  
19                        of software and hardware upgrades and tele-  
20                        communications and internet costs;  
21                        (H) to ensure that 211 and 988 services  
22                        are directly accessible, consistent with the  
23                        Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42  
24                        U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), section 508 of the Reha-  
25                        bilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794d), and

1           part 1194 of title 36, Code of Federal Regula-  
2           tions (or any successor regulations);  
3               (I) for staffing;  
4               (J) for training;  
5               (K) for activities related to accreditation;  
6               (L) for the evaluation of State 211 and  
7           988 activities and capacity;  
8               (M) for internet hosting and site develop-  
9           ment and maintenance for a statewide data-  
10           base;  
11              (N) for cloud-based data and messaging  
12           capacity;  
13              (O) to encourage coordination and collabora-  
14           tion of 211 and 988 services within the State  
15           and ensure coordination and collaboration with  
16           local 911 Public Safety Answering Points;  
17              (P) to integrate or share resources and  
18           service-level data with national platforms hosted  
19           by the Human Services National Board;  
20              (Q) to prepare and submit State and na-  
21           tional reporting requirements and other activi-  
22           ties approved by the Human Services State  
23           Oversight Council;  
24              (R) to provide stipends and travel reim-  
25           bursement for individuals with disabilities and

1           their family members for costs associated with  
2           serving on the Human Services State Oversight  
3           Council; or

4                         (S) to carry out other activities approved  
5           by the Human Services National Board on be-  
6           half of the Secretary.

7                 (2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In awarding a subgrant  
8           under this subsection, a lead entity shall consider—

9                         (A) the ability of the entity seeking the  
10           subgrant to carry out activities or provide serv-  
11           ices consistent with this Act;

12                         (B) the extent to which the award of the  
13           subgrant will facilitate equitable geographic dis-  
14           tribution of subgrants under this section to en-  
15           sure that rural communities have access to 211  
16           and 988 services; and

17                         (C) the extent to which the recipient of the  
18           subgrant will establish and maintain cooperative  
19           relationships with specialized information and  
20           referral centers, including Child Care Resource  
21           and Referral Agencies, crisis centers, referral  
22           agencies for aging or disability services, 911  
23           call centers, 311 call centers, and other call  
24           centers, as applicable.

6        (g) USE OF STATE ALLOTMENT AND SUBGRANT  
7 AMOUNTS.—

8                   (1) IN GENERAL.—Amounts awarded as State  
9                   allotments or subgrants under this section shall be  
10                  used solely for either or both of the following pur-  
11                  poses:

1               ity Indicators for Professional Information and  
2               Referral published by the Alliance of Informa-  
3               tion and Referral Systems fir 211 services;

4               (B) abide by the clinical standards and  
5               guidelines specified by the Administrator of the  
6               National Suicide Prevention Lifeline for 988  
7               crisis centers that are part of the National Sui-  
8               cide Prevention Lifeline Network; and

9               (C) collaborate with public and private  
10              human services organizations and existing na-  
11              tional, regional, and local information and re-  
12              ferral systems to provide an exhaustive and  
13              comprehensive database of services from which  
14              to provide information or referrals to individ-  
15              uals using the 211 and 988 services.

16              (3) USE OF SUBGRANT FUNDS.—Amounts  
17              awarded through a subgrant under subsection (f)  
18              may be used by the subgrant recipient for the pur-  
19              poses described in subsection (f)(1).

20              (h) REPORTS AND EVALUATIONS.—

21              (1) ANNUAL REPORTS.—The State Human  
22              Services Collaborative of each State receiving an al-  
23              lotment under this section shall submit to the  
24              Human Services National Board, not later than 60  
25              days after the end of each fiscal year in which such

1 allotment is made, a report on the program funded  
2 by the State allotment. Each report shall—

3 (A) describe the activities or services fund-  
4 ed by the State allotment;

5 (B) assess the effectiveness of such activi-  
6 ties and services in making available, to all resi-  
7 dents of the State, 211 and 988 services for  
8 emergency mental health services and informa-  
9 tion and referrals with respect to human serv-  
10 ices in accordance with the provisions of this  
11 section;

12 (C) assess the effectiveness of collaboration  
13 with human services resource and referral enti-  
14 ties and service providers;

15 (D) include the percentage of calls to 911  
16 or to police that were diverted to mental health  
17 and other human services responders; and

18 (E) describe the services to which individ-  
19 uals were linked through the 211 and 988 serv-  
20 ices and any efforts to track outcomes.

21 (2) EVALUATION.—Each State Human Services  
22 Collaborative shall award a contract to an inde-  
23 pendent entity to conduct an evaluation of the State  
24 211 and 988 systems biennially. The evaluation shall  
25 address—

(A) any barriers to access to the State 211 and 988 services for residents and visitors;

(B) the effectiveness of the State 211 and 988 services at connecting residents to needed human services;

(C) the effectiveness of collaborations among 211 and 988 partners;

(D) the effects of the State 211 and 988 services on 911 law enforcement, fire, and medical emergency services;

(E) the comprehensiveness of the information in the State 211 and 988 database;

(F) public awareness of the State 211 and 988 services;

(G) user satisfaction with the State 211  
and 988 services; and

(H) other topics identified by the Human Services State Oversight Councils

(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) 211 SERVICE.—The term “211 service” means providing residents with information and referrals, via voice telephone, text telephone, short message service, text, internet phone, or other telecommunication methods, with respect to health and human services and other provider agencies.

1                             (2) 988 SERVICE.—The term “988 service”  
2 means the provision of mental health or suicide cri-  
3 sis support and resources through the universal tele-  
4 phone number within the United States designated  
5 for the purpose of the national suicide prevention  
6 and mental health crisis hotline system operating  
7 through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

8                             (3) HUMAN SERVICES.—The term “human  
9 services” means services that—

- 10                                 (A) assist individuals in becoming more  
11 self-sufficient, in preventing dependency, and in  
12 strengthening family relationships;
- 13                                 (B) address social determinants of health;
- 14                                 (C) support personal and social develop-  
15 ment; or
- 16                                 (D) help ensure the health and well-being  
17 of individuals, families, and communities.

18                             (4) INDIAN TRIBE; TRIBAL ORGANIZATION.—  
19 The terms “Indian tribe” and “tribal organization”  
20 have the meanings given such terms in section 4 of  
21 the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assist-  
22 ance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304)).

23                             (5) STATE.—The term “State” means the sev-  
24 eral States, the District of Columbia, the Common-  
25 wealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Is-

1       lands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Common-  
2       wealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or an In-  
3       dian tribe or tribal organization.

4 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

5       (a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appro-  
6       priated to carry out this Act—

7               (1) \$550,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022  
8       and 2023, of which, each such fiscal year,  
9       \$350,000,000 shall be allocated for 211 services and  
10      \$200,000,000 shall be allocated for 988 services;  
11      and

12               (2) \$450,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024  
13       through 2028, of which, each such fiscal year,  
14       \$300,000,000 shall be allocated for 211 services and  
15       \$150,000,000 shall be allocated for 988 services.

16       (b) RESERVATION.—Of the amount appropriated  
17       under this section for a fiscal year, the Human Services  
18       National Board may reserve  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 1 percent for adminis-  
19       trative and national coordinating activities.

20       (c) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts appropriated pursuant  
21       to this section shall remain available until expended.

