

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 3444

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

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 7, 2023

Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Mr. TILLIS, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

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) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

8 (1) 9–8–8.—The term “9–8–8” means 9–8–8,
9 as designated as the universal telephone number
10 within the United States for the purpose of the na-

1 tional suicide prevention and mental health crisis
2 hotline system under section 251(e)(4) of the Com-
3 munications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 251(e)(4)).

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

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

10 (4) NON-SERVICE-INITIALIZED HANDSET.—The
11 term “non-service-initialized handset” has the mean-
12 ing given that term in section 9.10(o)(3)(i) of title
13 47, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor
14 regulation.

15 (b) PROXIMITY-BASED ROUTING.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall—

17 (A) not later than 1 year after the date of
18 enactment of this Act, initiate the rulemaking
19 process for regulations to ensure that each
20 phone call and text message made or sent to 9–
21 8–8 is routed to a participating crisis center
22 that is near the geographic area from which the
23 phone call or text message originated; and

1 (B) not later than 180 days after initiating
2 the rulemaking process under subparagraph
3 (A), issue final regulations.

4 (2) PRIVACY PROTECTIONS.—In promulgating
5 regulations under paragraph (1), the Commission
6 shall—

7 (A) protect the privacy of individuals who
8 contact 9–8–8 by ensuring that a phone call or
9 text message made or sent to 9–8–8 does not
10 reveal the precise location of the individual who
11 made or sent the phone call, text message, or
12 chat; and

13 (B) ensure that the geographic location
14 used to route the 9-8-8 call or text message is
15 accurate enough to determine the proper par-
16 ticipating crisis center without revealing the
17 precise location of the individual who made or
18 sent the phone call or text message.

19 (c) TRANSMISSION OF ALL CALLS AND TEXTS.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 270 days
21 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commis-
22 sion shall promulgate regulations to ensure that
23 each provider of commercial mobile service transmits
24 all calls and text messages made or sent to 9–8–8,
25 including a call or text message that originates from

1 a non-service-initialized handset (if the call or text
 2 message originates on a phone using a compliant
 3 radio frequency protocol of the provider).

4 (2) IMPLEMENTATION.—A provider of commer-
 5 cial mobile service shall comply with the regulations
 6 promulgated under paragraph (1) not later than 1
 7 year after the date on which the regulations are pro-
 8 mulgated.

9 (d) CONFIGURATION OF MULTI-LINE TELEPHONE
 10 SYSTEMS FOR DIRECT DIALING.—

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

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

15 (B) in subsection (a), by inserting “or 9-
 16 8-8” after “9-1-1”; and

17 (C) in subsection (b), by inserting “or 9-
 18 8-8” after “9-1-1”.

19 (2) APPLICABILITY.—

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

24 (B) EXCEPTION.—The amendment made
 25 by paragraph (1)(C) shall not apply to the

1 management or operation of a multi-line tele-
2 phone system installed before the date that is 2
3 years after the date of enactment of this Act,
4 if the system is not able to be configured to sat-
5 isfy the requirements of the amendment, with-
6 out an improvement to the hardware or soft-
7 ware of the system.

○