

Char Nosse, Vice-Chair Goodwin, Vice-Chair Nelson, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today with a heavy heart and a sense of urgency. As a High School Sophomore from Vida, I have seen firsthand the devastating impact that mental health crises can have on individuals and their families. I am here to tell you that every moment counts and that every Oregonian deserves access to the support they need during a crisis.

I suffer from anxiety and depression, and I understand all too well the fear and shame that can come with reaching out for help. But I also know the immense relief and comfort that comes from speaking to someone who can provide support and guidance. That is why I am speaking out in support of HB 2757, which seeks to expand and provide funding for the coordinated crisis services system, including the 9-8-8 suicide prevention and behavioral health crisis hotline.

I cannot stress enough how important it is for us to have a dedicated 9-8-8 crisis line that we can reach out to in our moment of need. The idea of having a simple, three-digit number to call for help brings me peace of mind, and I know it will do the same for countless others in our state. I also understand that in order to make this a reality, we must have the proper funding in place. That is why I am so grateful for the provisions in HB 2757 that create the 988 Trust Fund and the option for a telecom fee to ensure that the 988 system is efficiently funded and accessible to all communities.

As someone who has lived through the fear and shame of reaching out for help, I know that every moment counts. That is why I implore you to support HB 2757 and ensure that every Oregonian has access to the support they need during a crisis. Your support will help create a better, brighter future for all of us, and I cannot thank you enough for your dedication to this cause.

Sincerely,

Devon Lawson-McCourt

Sophomore Class President
Vida, Oregon