



June 24, 2024

Chairwoman Pavligia, Vice Chairwoman White, Ranking Member Brewer

Re: Support of HB 571 requiring all schools and higher education institutions to include the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline telephone number, 988 on student identification cards, student planners, and electronic portals

My name is Audrey Jones, LISW-S and I am the Chair of the Gallia, Jackson, Meigs Suicide Prevention Collaborative. The mission of the Collaborative is to prevent suicide through awareness, education, collaboration, support, improved access to mental health care and community resources. Our region in Southeast Ohio has been in the top six counties in Ohio for Suicide risk for the past few years. As such we are working diligently to get the word out about the 988 number so that we can decrease the stigma of asking for help and hopefully save lives by spreading awareness.

We believe that requiring schools and higher education institutions to include the 988 number on all of their student identification cards, student planners, and electronic portals will expand this effort to make all students aware of the access that they have to Hope when they need it most. We know that suicide is the leading cause of death for students between 10-14 years of age.

As someone who leads trainings in local K-12 schools and higher education institutions, I am often surprised when I share the 988 resources and people are unaware of their existence. We hope that this bill will bring to light the same level of awareness for the 988 number as we have for the 911 number.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [audrey.jones@hopewellhealth.org](mailto:audrey.jones@hopewellhealth.org).

Thank you,

Audrey Jones, LISW-S

Chair-Gallia, Jackson, Meigs Suicide Prevention Collaborative