HJR168

212415-2

By Representatives Ledbetter, Ellis, Lovvorn, Stringer, Faulkner, Wood (R), Hall, Estes, Garrett, Rafferty, Nordgren, Farley, Grimsley, Kitchens, Reynolds, Whitt, Moore (P), Daniels, Gray and Easterbrook

RFD: Rules

First Read: 01-APR-21
ENROLLED, House Joint Resolution,

CREATING THE STUDY COMMISSION ON THE 9-8-8
COMPREHENSIVE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISIS COMMUNICATION SYSTEM.

WHEREAS, in August 2018, the United States Congress passed the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2018, requiring the Federal Communications Commission to study the feasibility of designating a simple, easy-to-remember three-digit dialing code for a newly re-designated National Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Crisis Hotline System, the call number for which is currently 1-800-273-8255 (TALK); and

WHEREAS, in August 2019, the final Federal Communications Commission report to Congress proposed that “9-8-8” be the designated number, and proposed regulations published in January 2020 made that recommendation formally; and

WHEREAS, in October 2020, the President signed the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act (Public Law No: 116-172), making the 9-8-8 line the universal telephone number for the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system; and

WHEREAS, implementation of the three-digit call number will make crisis services instantly accessible and
thereby more effective in responding to mental health crises, suicidal ideations, and drug overdoses; and

WHEREAS, the 9-8-8 line will be nationally implemented on July 16, 2022, as required by the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020; and

WHEREAS, Alabama, in complying with the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 and the Federal Communications Commission’s rules adopted July 16, 2020, will ensure that all Alabamians receive consistent and effective behavioral health crisis services no matter where they live, work, or travel in the state; and

WHEREAS, Alabama seeks to develop and maintain access to a statewide crisis system of care that is interconnected, effective, and just; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH HOUSES THEREOF CONCURING, That the Study Commission on the 9-8-8 Comprehensive Behavioral Health Crisis Communication System is established.

(a) The purpose of the Study Commission on the 9-8-8 Comprehensive Behavioral Health Crisis Communication System is to study and provide recommendations for the implementation of the 9-8-8 system to enhance and expand behavioral health crisis response and suicide prevention services before it is nationally implemented on July 16, 2022 as required in Public
Law No: 116-172. The commission shall consider all of the following:

(1) How twenty-four seven statewide coverage for 9-8-8 calls, chats, and texts could be achieved in each county.

(2) Strategies for identifying and supporting investment in new technology to triage calls and link individuals to follow-up care.

(3) Funding to boost the financial stability and sustainability of call centers and evidence-based crisis services in every county, so that people experiencing behavioral health crises can receive higher quality support.

(4) Increasing of capacity at the call centers answering 9-8-8 contacts, for long-term improvement of answer rates for 9-8-8 calls.

(5) Requirements for compliance with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Requirements and Best Practices Guidelines for Operational and Clinical Standards.

(6) Ways for call centers to maintain local resource and referral listings and ensure linkages to local community crisis services.

(7) Ways for centers to provide follow-up services to 9-8-8 callers, texters, and chatters based on Lifeline best practices and guidelines.
(8) Requirements for compliance with the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 and the Federal Communications Commission's rules adopted July 16, 2020 to assure that all Alabama residents receive an effective level of 9-8-8 and crisis behavioral health services no matter where they live, work or travel in the state.

(b) The Study Commission on Alabama's 9-8-8 Comprehensive Behavioral Health Crisis Communication System shall be comprised of the following members:

(1) The Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Mental Health or his or her designee, who shall serve as chair of the commission.

(2) The State Health Officer of the Alabama Department of Public Health or his or her designee, who shall serve as co-chair of the commission.

(3) Two members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(4) Two members of the Senate, appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

(5) The Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs, or his or her designee.

(6) The Director of the Alabama Department of Emergency Management, or his or her designee.

(7) The Secretary of the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency, or his or her designee.
(8) The Governor of Alabama, or his or her designee.
(9) A representative of The Crisis Center.
(10) A representative from Crisis Services of North Alabama.
(11) A representative of Family Counseling Center of Mobile.
(12) Two representatives from the Alabama Council for Behavioral Healthcare.
(13) One representative from the Behavioral Healthcare Alliance of Alabama.
(14) One representative of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Alabama Chapter.
(15) One representative from the Alabama Department of Human Resources.
(16) One representative from NAMI Alabama, also known as the National Alliance on Mental Illness - Alabama.

(c) All appointing authorities shall coordinate their appointments so that diversity of gender, race, and geographical areas is reflective of the makeup of this state.
(d) The study commission shall meet as needed at the call of the chair.
(e) Each member shall serve at the pleasure of his or her appointing authority. A vacancy in the membership shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.
(f) Members of the commission shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for expenses as follows:

(1) The legislative members of the study commission shall be entitled to their legislative compensation, per diem, and travel expenses for each day they attend a meeting of the study commission, in accordance with Amendment 871 of the Constitution of Alabama of 1901.

(2) Other members of the commission may be reimbursed for necessary expenses in attending meetings of the commission according to policies and procedures of their respective appointing authority.

(g) A majority of the members of the study commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of all business at a regular or special meeting.

(h) The study commission shall hold its initial meeting no later than June 1, 2021. Each appointment made shall be indicated to the Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) no later than May 15, 2021.

(i) The commission chair or co-chair may ask the ADMH commissioner for research or writing assistance from ADMH staff.

(j) The study commission shall review the findings of the 9-8-8 comprehensive behavioral health crisis communication system landscape analysis submitted by ADMH. The study commission shall submit a report of its findings and
recommendations to the Senate President Pro Tempore and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on or before January 11, 2022, the first day of the 2022 Regular Legislative Session, at which time it shall be dissolved.
Speaker of the House of Representatives

President and Presiding Officer of the Senate

I hereby certify that the within Act originated in and was adopted by the House 13-APR-21.

Jeff Woodard
Clerk

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