

CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES BILL ANALYSIS

BILL NUMBER: AB 1540 **VERSION:** AMENDED JUNE 15, 2026

AUTHOR: GONZALEZ **SPONSOR:** • EQUALITY CALIFORNIA
• CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE OF CHILD AND
FAMILY SERVICES

RECOMMENDED POSITION: SUPPORT

SUBJECT: 988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE: LGBTQ+ YOUTH

Summary: The bill seeks to restore the LGBTQ+ youth crisis support option formerly available through the national 988 hotline, which allowed callers to press “3” to reach specialized providers. After the federal government ended funding for this program in July 2025, the author is proposing to reinstate the service in California.

Existing Law:

- 1) Existing Federal Law establishes the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020. This law designates 988 as the universal telephone number for the purpose of the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system operating through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and through the Veterans Crisis Line. (“S. 2661 - 116th Congress: National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020.”)
- 2) Establishes the Miles Hall Lifeline and Suicide Prevention Act in California. (Government Code (GC) §53123.1)
- 3) Tasks the state’s Office of Emergency Services and Health and Human Services Agency with various responsibilities related to state operation of the 988 system, including that they system allows for transfers between 988 and 911 centers, appointment of a director to oversee various logistics, and convening advisory groups. (GC §§53123.2, 53123.3)

This Bill:

- 1) States that young LGBTQ+ Californians have benefited from the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline’s LGBTQ+ Youth Specialized Services program since 2022, and it is the intent of the bill to reinstate this program in California. (GC §53123.7(a))
- 2) Requires the California Health and Human Services Agency to annually determine whether the federal government has activated an adequate specialized LGBTQ+ suicide prevention hotline under 988. If it has not, then requires the California

Office of Emergency Services and the California Health and Human Services Agency to implement the requirements outlined in this bill. (GC §53123.7(b)-(d))

- The Office of Emergency Services (OES) must, within 6 months of this determination, request the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to enable a press “3” function for 988 calls originating in California, that are automatically routed to a specialized call center. It must also request a text or chat feature for callers by texting “PRIDE” to 988.
 - OES must ensure that the above-mentioned technologies are available within 12 months of approval by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
 - Within 12 months of the above-referenced approval, requires the California Health and Human Services Agency to identify and contract with qualified entities that specialize in LGBTQ+ suicide prevention services.
- 3) Sets criteria for qualified entities that are contracted to provide these services, including that they must become a 988 center, they must comply with applicable laws regarding confidentiality of medical information, including the California Confidentiality of Medical Information Act and HIPAA, they have a primary objective of reducing suicide rates or addressing mental health crises, and they have a demonstrated mission including serving the LGBTQ+ population or employ staff who have extensive training in responding to LGBTQ+ crises in a culturally competent manner. (GC §53123.7(e))
- 4) This bill is an urgency statute and is effective upon the Governor’s signature.

Comments:

- 1) **Background and Author’s Intent.** In the intent language for the bill, the author states that since 2022, the nation’s 988 hotline has collaborated with several nonprofit organizations to offer special services designed to prevent LGBTQ+ youth suicide. This program allowed youth calling 988 to press “3” to automatically be routed to these specialized providers. They note that since 2022, 1.5 million contracts were routed to the LGBTQ+ service provider subnetwork. However, as of July 2025, the Trump administration halted all funding for the LGBTQ+ youth press “3” option and ended the service. Therefore, the author is seeking to reinstate this program in California.
- 2) **Previous Legislation.**
- AB 988 (Bauer-Kahan, Chapter 747, Statutes of 2022):** Established the Miles Hall Lifeline and Suicide Prevention Act, to implement the national 988 system in California.
- 3) **Support and Opposition.**

Support:

California Alliance of Child and Family Services (co-sponsor)
Equality California (co-sponsor)
Alameda County Office of Education
All for Kids
Alliance for Children's Rights
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
Behavioral Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission
Cal Voices
California Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists
California Association of School Psychologists
California Association of Social Rehabilitation Agencies
California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls
California Family Resource Association
California Fire Chiefs Association
California Primary Care Association
California School-Based Health Alliance
California Youth Empowerment Network
Child Abuse Prevention Center
County Behavioral Health Directors Association
County of Santa Clara
County Welfare Directors Association of California
Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services
Drug Policy Alliance
El/La Para TransLatinas
Fire Districts Association of California
Health Officers Association of California
Hmong Innovating Politics
Indivisible CA: StateStrong
John Burton Advocates for Youth
LGBTQ+ Inclusivity, Visibility, and Empowerment
Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis
Los Angeles County
Los Angeles LGBT Center
Los Angeles Unified School District
Lyon-Martin Community Health Services
Mental Health America of California
Multi-faith ACTION Coalition
National Alliance on Mental Illness California
National Center for Youth Law
National Health Law Program
Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays San Jose/Peninsula
Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California
Prevent Child Abuse California
Safe Kids California

San Diego LGBT Community Center
San Francisco AIDS Foundation
Santa Monica Democratic Club
Seneca Family of Agencies
Viet Voices

Oppose:

California Teachers Supporting Gender Non-Conforming Youth
Californians United for Sex-Based Evidence in Policy and Law
Democrats for an Informed Approach to Gender
Lesbians Advocating for a Resilient Future
LGB Alliance USA Foundation
Our Duty-USA
Save Glendora Schools
Women Are Real

4) History.

07/02/26 From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR. (Ayes 10. Noes 0.) (July 1). Re-referred to Com. on APPR.
06/24/26 From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on HEALTH. (Ayes 7. Noes 1.) (June 23). Re-referred to Com. on HEALTH.
06/15/26 From committee chair, with author's amendments: Amend, and re-refer to committee. Read second time, amended, and re-referred to Com. on E.M.
06/10/26 Referred to Coms. on E.M. and HEALTH.
05/28/26 In Senate. Read first time. To Com. on RLS. for assignment.
05/27/26 Read third time. Urgency clause adopted. Passed. Ordered to the Senate. (Ayes 64. Noes 8.).
05/18/26 Read second time. Ordered to third reading.
05/14/26 From committee: Do pass. (Ayes 11. Noes 1.) (May 14).
05/06/26 In committee: Set, first hearing. Referred to APPR. suspense file.
04/15/26 From committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR. (Ayes 7. Noes 0.) (April 15). Re-referred to Com. on APPR.
04/15/26 Coauthors revised.
03/23/26 Re-referred to Com. on C. & C.
03/19/26 Read second time and amended.
03/18/26 From committee: Amend, and do pass as amended and re-refer to Com. on C. & C. (Ayes 12. Noes 3.) (March 17).
02/18/26 Re-referred to Com. on HEALTH.
02/17/26 From committee chair, with author's amendments: Amend, and re-refer to Com. on HEALTH. Read second time and amended.
02/17/26 Referred to Coms. on HEALTH and C. & C.
01/06/26 From printer. May be heard in committee February 5.
01/05/26 Read first time. To print.

AMENDED IN SENATE JUNE 15, 2026
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 19, 2026
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY FEBRUARY 17, 2026
california legislature—2025–26 regular session

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1540

**Introduced by Assembly Member Mark González (Principal
coauthors: Assembly Members Lee and Ward) (Coauthors:
Assembly Members Addis, Bonta, Elhawary, Haney,
Harabedian, Jackson, Pellerin, Schiavo, Solache, Wallis, Zbur,
Aguiar-Curry, Boerner, and Stefani)**
(Coauthors: Senators Gonzalez, Menjivar, Padilla, Pérez, Wiener, and
Becker)

January 5, 2026

An act to add Section 53123.7 to the Government Code, relating to mental health, and declaring the urgency thereof, to take effect immediately.

legislative counsel's digest

AB 1540, as amended, Mark González. 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: LGBTQ+ youth.

Existing federal law, the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020, designates the 3-digit telephone number “988” as the universal number within the United States for the purpose of the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline system operating through the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Existing law, the Miles Hall Lifeline and Suicide Prevention Act, requires, among other things, the Office of Emergency Services (OES) to verify that technology that allows for transfers between 988 centers,

as well as between 988 centers and 911 public safety answering points, is available to 988 centers and 911 public safety answering points throughout the state, to appoint a 988 system director, and to verify interoperability between and across 911 and 988. Existing law establishes the 988 State Suicide and Behavioral Health Crisis Services Fund and provides that 988 surcharge revenue in the fund is available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for purposes of the act.

This bill would require *the California Health and Human Services Agency (agency) to annually determine whether an adequate specialized LGBTQ+ suicide prevention hotline is activated by the federal government under 988 and would make implementation of this bill contingent on the agency's determination, as specified. The bill would require OES to, no later than June 1, 2027, 6 months after the agency's determination, request the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to enable a press 3 function for calls originating in the State of California to allow callers to dial 988 and press "3" to be automatically routed to a specialized call center. The bill would require OES to, no later than 12 months following the approval by SAMHSA, ensure that the specified technologies are available.*

This bill would require, no later than 12 months following approval by SAMHSA, ~~the California Health and Human Services Agency~~ *agency* to identify and contract with a qualified entity or entities that specialize in LGBTQ+ suicide prevention services. The bill would require the agency to determine the eligibility criteria, establish an application process, and administer funds to the qualified entity, as specified. The bill would require a qualified entity to comply with various requirements, including having a primary objective of reducing suicide rates or addressing mental health crises.

This bill would declare that it is to take effect immediately as an urgency statute.

Vote: $\frac{2}{3}$. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:

1 (a) All children, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender
2 identity, or gender expression, deserve to live a full and happy life
3 without suffering from bullying and mental health crises.

4 (b) Attacks on the rights, safety, and dignity of LGBTQ+ youth
5 continue to grow across the country, including in California. These
6 efforts have a measurable impact on the health and well-being of
7 LGBTQ+ youth and have led to a rise in bullying, harassment, and
8 discrimination.

9 (c) LGBTQ+ youth have increased reported instances of
10 bullying, hate crimes, and harassment than compared to their
11 heterosexual or cisgender peers.

12 (d) The latest national survey on the mental health of LGBTQ+
13 youth in California found that 56 percent of LGBTQ+ youth in
14 California experienced discrimination based on their sexual
15 orientation or gender identity in the past year.

16 (e) (1) A longitudinal study published in 2025 reported that
17 mental health distress among LGBTQ+ youth has been increasing
18 amid a surge of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, but strong support
19 networks and access to health care were shown to ease symptoms
20 for some.

21 (2) That study found mental health distress increased
22 substantially throughout the study's first year. LGBTQ+ youth
23 reporting recent anxiety symptoms rose from 57 percent to 68
24 percent. Those reporting depressive symptoms climbed from 48
25 percent to 54 percent. Suicidal ideation among LGBTQ+ youth
26 grew from 41 percent to 47 percent.

27 (f) Another 2025 study found that most LGBTQ+ people, and
28 especially transgender and nonbinary respondents, reported
29 anti-LGBTQ+ laws and rhetoric has negatively impacted their
30 mental health and well-being. Additionally, a majority of LGBTQ+
31 people and more than 8 in 10 transgender and nonbinary individuals
32 reported they or their families have faced harassment or
33 discrimination since November 2024.

34 (g) A 2023 study by the federal Centers for Disease Control and
35 Prevention found that lesbian, gay, and bisexual students were
36 more than three times more likely to have attempted suicide than
37 their heterosexual peers: that number jumps to almost four times
38 as likely for transgender high school students. In other words, 20
39 percent of surveyed students who identified as lesbian, gay, or
40 bisexual reported having attempted suicide compared to 6 percent

1 of their heterosexual peers. This figure jumps to nearly 26 percent
2 for transgender high school students.

3 (h) Research by The Trevor Project also indicates that LGBTQ+
4 students often struggle to access competent mental health services
5 tailored to their unique experiences.

6 (i) The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reported that
7 schools were the third most commonly known location for hate
8 crimes against LGBTQ+ youth and community members, and that
9 hate crimes more than doubled at elementary and secondary schools
10 and universities from 2018 to 2022, inclusive. The FBI also noted
11 that participation in the collection of the aforementioned data
12 regarding hate crime reports in schools is voluntary for most
13 agencies and is only mandatory for federal agencies; therefore, the
14 figures provided in the FBI's report are likely incomplete and
15 underreported.

16 (j) Since 2022, 988, the nation's official hotline for suicide
17 prevention and crisis counseling, has collaborated with several
18 nonprofit organizations that offer specialized services designed to
19 prevent LGBTQ+ youth suicide. The 988 Suicide & Crisis
20 Lifeline's LGBTQ+ Youth Specialized Services program allowed
21 youth who called "988" to press "3" and automatically be routed
22 to a subnetwork of providers.

23 (k) Since 2022, 1,500,000 contacts were routed to the LGBTQ+
24 service provider subnetwork.

25 (l) By order of President Donald Trump on June 17, 2025, all
26 funding for LGBTQ+ youth services Press 3 option was halted.
27 This service officially ended on July 17, 2025. ~~The ending of this~~
28 ~~service has resulted in a gap of specialized LGBTQ+ mental health~~
29 ~~services.~~

30 SEC. 2. Section 53123.7 is added to the Government Code, to
31 read:

32 53123.7. (a) It is the intent of the State of California to
33 continue its long history of advancing policies that support suicide
34 prevention efforts and further the initiative to address our youth
35 mental health crisis. Young LGBTQ+ Californians have benefited
36 from the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline's LGBTQ+ Youth
37 Specialized Services program since 2022. It is the intent of the
38 Legislature to reinstate this program in California.

39 (b) *The California Health and Human Services Agency shall*
40 *annually determine whether an adequate specialized LGBTQ+*

1 *suicide prevention hotline is activated by the federal government*
2 *under 988. The Office of Emergency Services and the California*
3 *Health and Human Services Agency shall implement the*
4 *requirements of this section only after the agency has made a*
5 *determination that an adequate specialized LGBTQ+ suicide*
6 *prevention hotline has not been activated by the federal government*
7 *under 988.*

8 ~~(b) The~~

9 *(c) Subject to subdivision (b), the Office of Emergency Services*
10 *shall do both of the following:*

11 *(1) No later than ~~June 1, 2027~~, 6 months after the California*
12 *Health and Human Services Agency determines that an adequate*
13 *specialized LGBTQ+ suicide prevention hotline has not been*
14 *activated by the federal government under 988, request the federal*
15 *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to*
16 *enable a press 3 function for calls originating in the State of*
17 *California. A press 3 function shall allow callers to dial 988 and*
18 *press “3” to be automatically routed to a specialized call center,*
19 *as set forth in subdivision ~~(d)~~. (e). The office shall also request*
20 *authorization to enable text or chat features between a caller and*
21 *a specialized 988 call center by texting “PRIDE” to 988. The*
22 *specialized 988 call center shall be a qualified entity that meets*
23 *the requirements described in subdivision ~~(d)~~. (e).*

24 *(2) No later than 12 months following the approval by the*
25 *federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services*
26 *Administration or its contracted 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline*
27 *Administrator, ensure that technologies described in paragraph (1)*
28 *are available.*

29 ~~(e)~~

30 *(d) No later than 12 months following approval of the request*
31 *submitted pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision ~~(b)~~, (c), the*
32 *California Health and Human Services Agency shall identify and*
33 *contract with a qualified entity or entities, as set forth in subdivision*
34 *~~(d)~~, (e), that specialize in LGBTQ+ suicide prevention services.*
35 *The agency shall determine the eligibility criteria, establish an*
36 *application process, and administer funds to the qualified entity*
37 *pursuant to this article. The agency shall also take into*
38 *consideration whether the applicant is or was previously a part of*
39 *the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline network. The agency shall*
40 *prioritize applicants that primarily service LGBTQ+ populations.*

1 ~~(d)~~

2 (e) A qualified entity shall comply with all of the following:

3 (1) Become a “988 center” as defined in Section 53123.1.5. As
4 a 988 center, the qualified entity shall be eligible for funding and
5 subject to the requirements under this article.

6 (2) Maintain policies that ~~include:~~ *comply with the California*
7 *Confidentiality of Medical Information Act (CMIA) (Part 2.6*
8 *(commencing with Section 56) of Division 1 of the Civil Code),*
9 *the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act*
10 *of 1996 (HIPAA) (Public Law 104-191), and all other applicable*
11 *state laws governing the protection of sensitive personal and*
12 *medical information.*

13 ~~(A) No requirement for a caller to provide name, age or date of~~
14 ~~birth, gender, race or ethnicity, citizenship status, or any other~~
15 ~~identifying information to receive crisis intervention services.~~

16 ~~(B) A prohibition against sharing identifying information outside~~
17 ~~of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, including with private donors~~
18 ~~and the federal government, except as required by law.~~

19 (3) Have a primary objective of reducing suicide rates or
20 addressing mental health crises.

21 (4) Demonstrate that its mission includes serving the LGBTQ+
22 population or that it employs staff or volunteers who have
23 completed extensive training in responding to LGBTQ+ crisis
24 contacts in a culturally competent manner. The qualified entity
25 shall ensure that ~~dedicated~~ trained staff or volunteers are available
26 to respond to those contacts through an established routing system.

27 SEC. 3. This act is an urgency statute necessary for the
28 immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety within
29 the meaning of Article IV of the California Constitution and shall
30 go into immediate effect. The facts constituting the necessity are:

31 In order to address the urgent LGBTQ+ youth suicide crisis we
32 face in California, it is necessary for this act to take effect
33 immediately.

O