



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SEP 29 2022

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am signing Assembly Bill 988, which enacts the Miles Hall Lifeline and Suicide Prevention Act to establish 9-8-8 centers in California for the purpose of connecting individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis with suicide prevention and mental health services. Importantly, this bill also provides a dedicated revenue source to fund a 9-8-8 system in California.

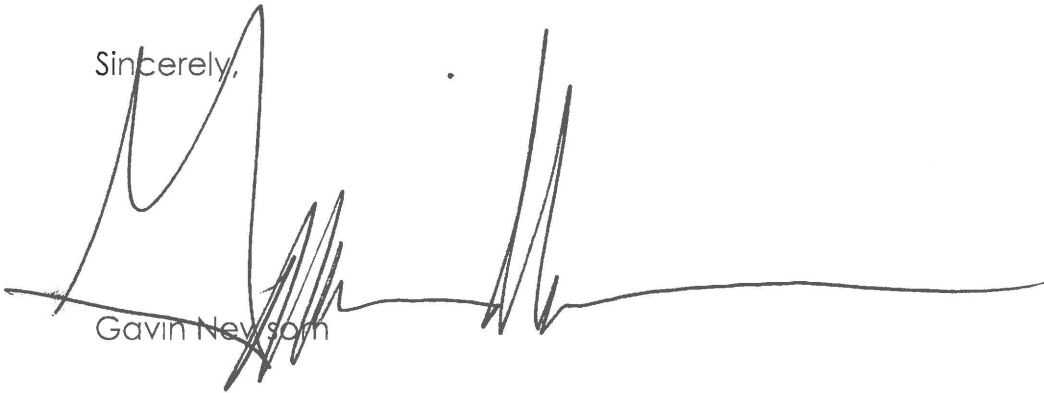
The 9-8-8 Lifeline represents an unprecedented opportunity to design and build a robust behavioral health crisis prevention, response, and care system. Following the federal passage of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Network, my Administration wasted no time to begin implementing this system in California. The last two budget cycles dedicated resources for this purpose, and the California Health and Human Services Agency has launched efforts to develop a plan to connect behavioral health efforts like 9-8-8 call centers with other behavioral health initiatives.

While the work of my Administration is ongoing, dedicated resources supporting a comprehensive 9-8-8 system are needed, as are clear policies for how this system will interact with the overall behavioral health continuum. While this bill attempts to provide those needed resources and policy direction, as drafted, the use of revenue generated is unduly restricted. This creates considerable confusion about how certain services will be financed, and could severely limit the full potential of the behavioral health crisis response promised by the bill.



Without refinements to these provisions and others, our effort to establish a comprehensive suicide and behavioral health crisis response system – one that can help prevent avoidable tragedies and increase access to the right kind of care – will fall short. Therefore, I am directing the California Health and Human Services Agency to propose cleanup language as part of the 2023-24 Governor's Budget to ensure this bill delivers on its promise to build a fully operational and comprehensive 9-8-8 system in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Gavin Newsom", written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and somewhat messy, with several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Gavin Newsom