

Dear Member of Congress:

I write to you on behalf of the Autism Society of America, seeking your vital support for the [Human-Services Emergency Logistics Program \(HELP\) Act](#), ([S. 1729](#)), a bipartisan bill introduced by Senator Robert P. Casey (D-PA).

The HELP Act aims to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency response systems by diverting non-criminal, non-fire, and non-medical emergency calls from the 9-1-1 systems to the appropriate state and regional 2-1-1 and 9-8-8 systems. Furthermore, it will enhance the existing 2-1-1 and 9-8-8 referral systems by providing necessary funding and resources and creating a community-led oversight system that represents diverse voices including older adults, people with disabilities, communities of color, Tribal and Native Peoples, and LGBTQ+ individuals.

For individuals with disabilities, particularly those with Autism who may have co-occurring mental health conditions, the HELP Act represents a significant step toward more compassionate and effective care. By coordinating responses and reducing potentially harmful interactions with law enforcement, it creates a safer environment for those in mental health distress.

Transitioning to 988 will transform crisis care in our country. The data speaks for itself, with nearly 98% of those who reach out to the 988 Lifeline receiving the immediate support they need without requiring additional services at that moment.

Research has indicated that approximately 70 percent of those with Autism have at least one or more co-occurring mental health conditions ([Drexel, 2016](#)). The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) has noted that Autism symptoms can overlap with other mental health disorders, such as anxiety or ADHD ([NIMH 2018](#)). By supporting the HELP Act, you will be taking a firm stand toward a more inclusive, responsive, and humane approach to mental health support in our nation.

Your support for this legislation can make a tangible difference in the lives of people with Autism and other disabilities. We kindly request that you consider becoming a co-sponsor of the HELP Act to demonstrate your commitment to this critical issue and urge a floor vote to accelerate the passage of this essential bill.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,
Kim Musheno
Vice President of Public Policy
Autism Society of America