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Active Minds Celebrates Senate Committee Advancement on Mental Health Priorities: A Key Step Forward in the Federal Appropriations Process

Senate endorses youth-driven mental health policies, advancing access to crisis resources and peer-led support across schools and campuses nationwide.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — [Active Minds](https://www.activeminds.org), the nation's leading nonprofit organization mobilizing youth and young adults to transform mental health norms, is proud to announce the inclusion of two major policy priorities in the **Senate Fiscal Year 2026 Appropriations Report** — marking a historic step forward in federal support for youth-centered mental health initiatives.

This step represents the first time Congress has recognized these specific needs in official appropriations language, signaling a growing national commitment to ensuring youth and young adults are informed, supported, and empowered to care for their mental health.

"These wins reflect what we, at Active Minds, have known for more than 20 years: when young people lead, change happens," said **Laura Horne, Chief Program Officer, Active Minds**.

"Youth and young adults deserve mental health resources that are accessible, relevant, and created with them—not just for them. These policies move us closer to truly championing a new era of mental health"

"As someone who has personally seen how hard it can be for young people to find mental health support in moments of crisis, these wins are deeply personal to me," said Ayaan Moledina, Active Minds chapter member and Federal Policy Director for Students Engaged in Advancing Texas (SEAT). *"By putting 988 on student ID cards, reinstating the Press 3 LGBTQ+ subnetwork, and strengthening the Garrett Lee Smith Campus Suicide Prevention Program, Congress is ensuring more students—no matter who they are—have a lifeline when they need it most. I'm grateful to our champions in the Senate and to partners like Active Minds for working alongside us to make sure young people's voices, identities, and futures are valued and protected."*

WIN #1: Ensuring Every Student Knows Where to Turn in Crisis

[Active Minds](https://www.activeminds.org) successfully advocated for new language in the Senate report urging printing of the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) information directly on student ID cards. The Senate now **encourages SAMHSA** to coordinate with educational institutions and youth mental health organizations to improve awareness of 988 among adolescents and young adults.

“Adolescent and Young Adult Awareness of the 988 Lifeline.—The Committee encourages SAMHSA to [...] increase adolescent and young adult awareness of 988, including via the publication of 988 on newly-printed standard issue student identification cards.” (p. 175)

These policy recommendations are our priority because student mental health challenges continue to rise:

- 40% of high school students reported feelings of hopelessness in 2023 (Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, YRBSS)
- Only 5% of young adults are aware of the 988 Lifeline (University of Pennsylvania Annenberg Public Policy Center)
- Among those experiencing suicidal ideation, nearly 50% don’t seek help (Psychiatry Research)

WIN #2: Recognizing the Power of Student-Led Support

The Senate report also reflects a major policy priority from [Active Minds](#) to include **student-to-student mental health programs**—like [Active Minds chapters](#) and [A.S.K.](#)—in suicide prevention efforts. The report calls on SAMHSA to encourage Garrett Lee Smith Campus Suicide Prevention Grant applicants to consult and collaborate with campus-based student mental health groups.

“The Committee understands that campus-based student groups [...] can be beneficial in increasing the likelihood classmates will seek treatment. The Committee recommends SAMHSA encourage applicants to seek input from relevant stakeholders, including student-serving mental health groups on campus.” (p. 176)

This acknowledgment of youth-led mental health efforts helps to lay the groundwork for **federal funding and sustained support** for student-driven solutions. Click [here for the full report](#).

Additional Senate Report Highlights:

- **\$33.1 million** to restore “Press 3” services for 988, providing specialized support for LGBTQ+ youth.
- **\$10 million** in funding for expanded **Spanish-language services** for 988.

TAKE ACTION! What can YOU do to move this further;

What’s next? The House Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee plans to publish its bill version and conduct markups in September. You can become an advocate by showing your support during the upcoming House-Senate negotiation period this fall. Stay active in the

process while preparing to back these priorities during the final legislative stage. Please click [here](#) to be a part of the movement.

Active Minds expresses deep appreciation to the bipartisan leadership that made these wins possible, including: **Chairwoman Susan Collins (R-ME), Vice Chair Patty Murray (D-WA), Subcommittee Chair Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Ranking Member Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), and Senators John Boozman (R-AR) and Cory Booker (D-NJ).**

For more information about Active Minds and how to get involved, visit www.activeminds.org.

About Active Minds:

Active Minds is the largest nonprofit in the United States mobilizing youth and young adults to transform mental health norms across society. For more than 20 years, we have equipped the next generation of peer mental health advocates through a variety of programs, including the Active Minds Chapter Network, A.S.K., and Send Silence Packing. Our advocacy, initiatives, and campaigns foster lasting change in how youth view and discuss mental health, encouraging them to use their voices to influence broader conversations and inform mental health supports within their communities. Together, we are building a diverse movement of champions committed to improving mental health for all. To learn more about Active Minds, visit activeminds.org.