

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Active Minds Secures Major Federal Policy Wins Elevating Youth-Led Support and 988 Awareness in Draft Federal Budgets

Bipartisan momentum grows for student-led prevention programs and life-saving 988 Lifeline access.

Washington, D.C. — In a significant step forward for youth mental health advocacy, [Active Minds](#), the nation's leading nonprofit organization mobilizing youth and young adults to transform mental health norms, has successfully secured its first-ever federal appropriations language in both the [House and Senate Fiscal Year 2026 \(FY26\) draft reports](#). These inclusions spotlight the importance of youth-led support and prioritize increased youth awareness of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (988 Lifeline), marking a watershed moment in the organization's national policy efforts.

At a time when youth and young adults continue to face rising mental health challenges, these appropriations victories acknowledge the growing role of peer-led programs and the urgent need to connect more people to life-saving crisis services.

"Young people are finally being recognized as key voices leading the charge for mental health change," said [Anika Rahman](#), **Director of Policy at Active Minds**. "Active Minds' success in securing these appropriations is a reflection of the powerful impact of much-needed youth-led support and 988 awareness. This language in both the House and Senate draft reports highlight that youth-driven solutions are critical to improving mental health outcomes. We're proud of this progress and remain committed to ensuring it passes in the final package."

Appropriations Language: What It Means

Included in both the *Senate Draft Report* and the *House Draft Report* are provisions that:

- **Elevate the role of youth-led support** on college campuses through the multi-million dollar Garrett Lee Smith (GLS) Campus Suicide Prevention program by encouraging The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to prioritize funding for student-led crisis intervention and primary prevention training programs.
- **Expand 988 Lifeline visibility** by encouraging federal agencies and colleges to ensure the 988 number is clearly printed on new student ID cards.
- **Increase public education efforts** to raise broader awareness of the 988 Lifeline, particularly among high-risk groups, including youth, veterans, and rural communities.

The reports call for more equitable outreach and transparency in how funds are allocated.

This marks the first time Active Minds has had policy recommendations adopted in both chambers' appropriations reports; a testament to the growing national recognition of the power of youth-led support advocacy.

Momentum Toward Systems-Level Change

With inclusion in both the House and Senate reports, Active Minds is now well-positioned to advocate for these provisions to be included in the final FY26 appropriations package and pass them into law. This progress builds on recent policy wins and national partnerships that are shifting the narrative around youth mental health from one of crisis to one of collective action and systemic reform.

Full Report Language Includes:

Youth-Led Peer Support

The House urges SAMHSA to fund youth-led crisis training and prevention on college campuses, recognizing the impact of early intervention by students.

988 on Student ID Cards

Federal agencies are encouraged to work with schools to print the 988 Lifeline on new student ID cards to boost awareness.

National 988 Awareness

Both chambers call on SAMHSA to expand outreach efforts, especially for underserved and high-risk communities.

[Read the full House Report language \(pages 139 & 145\)](#)

[Read the full Senate Report language \(page 176\)](#)

TAKE ACTION! What can YOU do to move this further

We invite you to be part of our [new Advocacy & Policy Champions Group](#), a space for change-makers who want to make a difference but aren't sure how to start (or want to highlight a project already underway). Learn how policy is made, get tools to turn your ideas into action, and have a chance to share your work on our virtual series.

Looking ahead to 2026: we'll also prepare you for Hill Day, you'll be ready to meet with lawmakers in Washington, D.C for two key priorities: Get 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline information printed on all student IDs and ensure that applicants for the Garrett Lee Smith Campus Suicide Prevention Grant collaborate with student mental health groups on campus.

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.