

STATE IMPLEMENTATION OF 988 SUICIDE PREVENTION HOTLINE

Presentation to the
NCSL Task Force on State and Local Taxation

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Scott Mackey
Leonine Public Affairs

Overview

- Task Force Telecom Tax Policy Principles
- Federal 988 Suicide Prevention Hotline Legislation
- Wireless Industry 988 Principles
- Overview of State Actions So Far in 2021

NCSL Task Force Principles

- Administrative simplification
- Competitive neutrality
- Industry-specific taxes “not justified”
- Oppose federal pre-emption

Federal 988 Legislation

- Signed into law October 2020
- Creates a national 988 suicide prevention hotline, similar to “911”
- Requires telecom companies & states to be prepared to accept 988 calls in July 2022
- Allows (does not require) states to impose 988 fees on wireless and VOIP for the hotline and related services

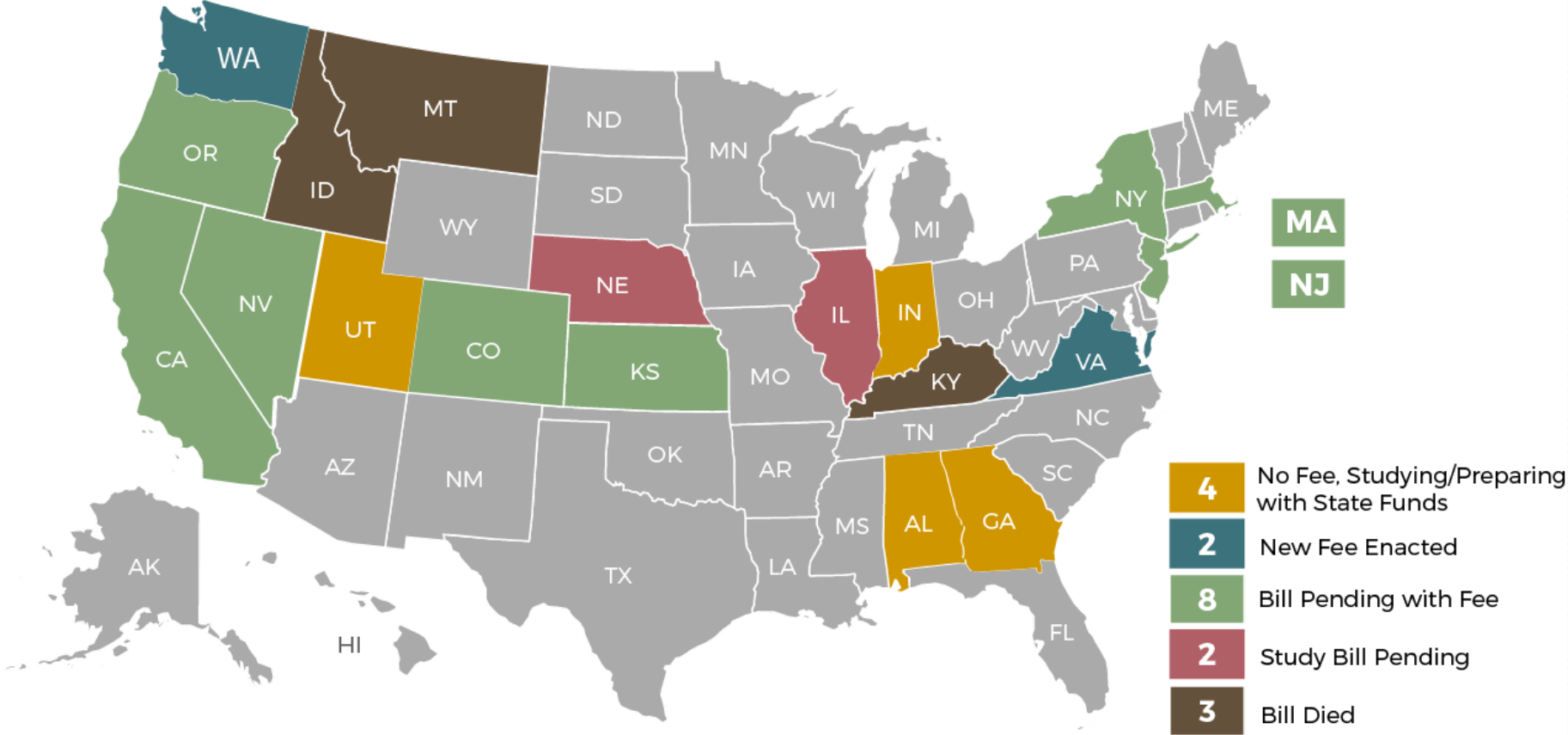
Wireless Industry Principles

- Support 988 hotline designation and will make necessary network changes to implement
- Do not oppose imposition of 988 fees, but they should be competitively neutral and imposed statewide (no local government fees)
- States should consider if other funding sources that have a broader base would be more appropriate

Industry Principles (cont.)

- Fees should be kept as low as possible as wireless consumers already pay taxes and fees more than two times higher than other taxable goods and services
- Fee revenues should be limited to funding expenses directly related to call taking and dispatch, just like with 911
- Additional services like mobile crisis teams, acute care, and follow-up services should be funded from general revenues, not from 988 fees

State 988 Bills 2021



Summary

- Most states likely to see 988 hotline implementation bills prior to July 2022 date when 988 goes live
- Wireless consumers already pay disproportionately high taxes and fees
- If states choose to impose new 988 fees, they should be limited to expenses related to call taking and dispatch (like 911)

Presenter Contact Information

Scott Mackey

Managing Partner

Leonine Public Affairs, LLP

Montpelier, VT 05602

802 236 7725

mackey@leoninepublicaffairs.com