

For Immediate Release

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Governor Highlights Oregon Law Requiring AI Companion Apps to Connect Teens in Crisis to Human Care

PORTLAND, Ore. — Gov. Tina Kotek held a ceremonial signing for [Senate Bill 1546](#) (and other key behavioral health legislation) today at an event in Portland, joined by behavioral health leaders, frontline crisis workers, and the legislators who championed the bill.

The law requires AI companion platforms to detect signs of suicidal ideation, immediately connect users in crisis to resources like the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, and apply additional protections when the user is a minor. It was championed by [Lines for Life](#) and a broad coalition of behavioral health advocates who spent months building the case that the absence of crisis safeguards on these platforms was a public health problem Oregon could no longer ignore.

Lines for Life operates [YouthLine](#), Oregon’s teen-to-teen crisis service, where young people call, text, or chat with trained peer volunteers. Through this work, the organization has seen firsthand how often youth in distress reach out without clear pathways to support.

"This law helps turn a moment of risk into an opportunity for intervention — and hope," said Dwight Holton, CEO of Lines for Life. "Research published just last month makes clear that connecting to 988 reduces the risk of suicide — and this new law helps make that connection for people who are struggling."

A study published April 22, 2026, in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that the launch of the national 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is linked to an 11% reduction in youth suicide deaths from projections, resulting in nearly 4,400 fewer youth deaths by suicide than expected during the first 18 months of 988 operation.

A Response to Where Teens Are Seeking Support

Research shows three in four teens have used AI companion apps at least once, with half using them routinely. These platforms have become a primary emotional outlet for many young people. Yet until now, they faced no requirement to respond when a user expressed thoughts of suicide or self-harm. A teenager could describe a crisis in detail and receive a response with no mention of help.

SB 1546 changes that. Platforms operating in Oregon must now:

- Detect language indicating suicidal ideation or self-harm.
- Immediately connect users in crisis to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline or equivalent resources.
- Apply additional protections when the user is a minor.
- Report crisis referral data to the Oregon Health Authority, creating a public record of whether platforms are connecting people to help.

That last requirement is significant. It allows Oregon to measure the real-world impact of these safeguards over time and strengthen policy as the evidence develops.

"By setting clear, enforceable standards, Oregon is showing that technology and care can work together to support people in times of need," Holton added.

Part of a National Movement

Oregon joins New York, California, and a growing number of states requiring crisis safeguards on AI companion platforms. Today's signing reflects the momentum of that movement and the role Oregon's behavioral health community played in pushing it forward.

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About Lines for Life

Based in Portland, Oregon, Lines for Life is a nonprofit dedicated to preventing substance abuse and suicide and promoting mental wellness. Our work addresses a spectrum of needs including intervention, prevention, and advocacy. Learn more at [linesforlife.org](https://www.linesforlife.org).