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Washington, D.C. -- Rep. Anna G. Eshoo (D-CA), Rep. Richard Burr (R-NC), and Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY) were joined by actor George Clooney and the leadership of the United Way of America in introducing the Calling for 2-1-1 Act of 2003 today. The legislation will enable states and local communities to create a 2-1-1 phone service for information on social services.

"It's time to end the confusion in our communities on how people can quickly access the help they need," Eshoo said. "Whether they're looking for child care programs, drug and alcohol treatment centers, mental health counseling, or other important social services, this legislation will help create a one-stop shop supported by federal, state and local governments, the private sector, and non-profit organizations."

The Calling for 2-1-1 Act authorizes \$200 million annually in federal matching funds for public/private investments to develop and sustain 2-1-1 services nationwide. Among other things, funding may be used for planning and implementing 2-1-1, operating costs, technology upgrades, public awareness, and training and evaluation. To qualify for the federal grants, at least 50% of the total funding must come from non-federal sources.

Earlier this year, the California Public Utilities Commission voted to implement a 2-1-1 referral line for the state. That decision was followed by a unanimous vote by the Sunnyvale City Council in April to support the creation of a 2-1-1 referral number to serve the residents of Santa Clara County.

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