

**Chris O'Brien**

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**From:** Melissa Ames <missyamesafsp@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 20, 2021 3:57 PM  
**To:** House Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Fwd: HB 5053 for Bridge Barriers in Rhode Island-Testimony  
**Attachments:** Bridge Barrier bill testimony of support AFSP RI.pdf

Sorry, here is an attachment of my testimony as well. Thanks.

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** **Melissa Ames** <[missyamesafsp@gmail.com](mailto:missyamesafsp@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** Sat, Feb 20, 2021 at 3:51 PM  
**Subject:** HB 5053 for Bridge Barriers in Rhode Island-Testimony  
**To:** <[HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov](mailto:HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov)>

**RE: Support HB 5053 for Bridge Barriers in Rhode Island**

Melissa Ames  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
Board Chair AFSP Rhode Island Chapter  
Phone: 401-447-9816 Email: [missyamesafsp@gmail.com](mailto:missyamesafsp@gmail.com)

Thank you for the opportunity to share written testimony in support of HB 5053, which directs the Department of Transportation, in conjunction with the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority, to erect safety barriers or safety netting on the Mount Hope Bridge, the Claiborne Pell Bridge, and the Jamestown Verrazzano Bridge, no later than January 1, 2023.

My name is Melissa Ames and I am the board chair of the RI Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. The volunteer-led Rhode Island Chapter of AFSP is here to save lives and bring hope to those affected by suicide -- through research, education, advocacy, and support to our Rhode Island community.

Suicide is a leading, preventable public health problem in our state. In Rhode Island, suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for youth and adults ages 10-34. On average, one person dies by suicide every 68 hours in the state. AFSP has set a bold goal to reduce the annual suicide rate across the country 20% by the year 2025. By working together with leaders and advocates like all of you, I know we can make progress toward this goal and save lives.

As a survivor of suicide loss, suicide barriers on bridges in our state are of utmost importance to me. Barriers give suicidal individuals and those who care for them something they desperately need: TIME. This includes time for the suicidal impulse to pass, time for someone to intervene, or time to seek help.