



**American  
Foundation  
for Suicide  
Prevention**

Rhode Island

**RE: 5776 Support Bridge Barriers in Rhode Island**

Representative Marvin Abney, Chairman House Finance Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street Providence, RI 02903

May 21, 2025

Dear Representative Abney and members of the House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share testimony in support for house bill 5776 which Directs the RITBA to design a safety barrier or netting system on the several bridges within its authority. Any newly constructed bridges with a deck height of over one hundred feet (100 ft) would be required to have safety barriers or safety netting.

My name is Kerrie Constant, and I am a resident of Warwick, RI, and the Area Director for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Rhode Island Chapter (AFSP-RI). AFSP-RI is a voluntary health organization that gives those affected by suicide a nationwide community empowered by research, education, and advocacy to take action against this leading cause of death. I am also a mother of a son, who has experienced suicidal ideations and mental health challenges, I recognize how important minimizing access to lethal means is to save lives

Barriers give suicidal individuals and those who care for them something they desperately need – TIME. Time for the intense suicidal risk to diminish and time for someone to intervene with mental health support and resources. Research consistently shows that the majority of those averted from a suicide attempt at a publicly accessible area of height do not go on to complete suicide elsewhere or with another method, and overall, suicide deaths often decline throughout the surrounding area after structural barriers are in place.

- Reducing access to lethal means, such as tall bridges, is a proven, research supported component of suicide prevention.
- A summary report of thirteen studies found a 91% reduction in suicide at publicly accessible areas of height where barriers were installed.
- A recent study on the effectiveness of nets installed on the Golden Gate Bridge found that suicides declined by 26% while the nets were being installed and by 73% after their installation was complete
- Research has found that individuals thwarted in utilizing a preferred method of suicide do not typically seek alternative methods.
- One study found that 62% of individuals would not choose another place to jump from after being deterred by a barrier.

Committee members, your support of Bill 5776 will affirm how important it is to prevent suicide and save and protect the lives of Rhode Islanders. Together, we can prevent the tragic loss of life by bridge suicides that have a profound impact on families and communities.

Sincerely,

Kerrie Constant

Area Director of AFSP-RI

Warwick, Kent County Resident



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## References:

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