

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to urge you to support H8148, the bill directing the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority to design and implement suicide prevention barriers and/or safety netting on major Rhode Island bridges, including the Claiborne Pell Bridge, Mount Hope Bridge, Sakonnet River Bridge, and Jamestown Verrazzano Bridge.

This legislation is a compassionate and evidence-based public safety measure that will save lives.

Research consistently shows that suicidal crises are often brief and impulsive. Approximately 24% of individuals who survive a suicide attempt report acting within less than five minutes of deciding to attempt, and roughly 70% contemplate suicide for less than one hour before acting. Barriers create time — time for the impulse to pass, time for intervention, and time for someone to receive help.

Bridge barriers have demonstrated roughly 90% effectiveness worldwide in reducing suicides at known locations, without leading to equivalent increases elsewhere. Just as importantly, studies show that about 90% of people who survive a suicide attempt do not later die by suicide. Prevention works, and a single interruption can change — and save — a life.

H8148 recognizes that our public infrastructure should protect Rhode Islanders in moments of crisis. This bill offers a practical, humane, and proactive approach grounded in public health evidence and suicide prevention best practices.

I respectfully ask that you support H8148 and help move this legislation forward in committee and on the House floor.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Amanda Pitta