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Members of the committee,

Thank you for hearing testimony last night on H8148. This bill is very important to me, both as a psychiatric nurse practitioner and as a survivor of suicide loss. My cousin, Matthew, died on July 27, 2023 after pulling over and jumping from the Mount Hope Bridge. The impact of this loss to our family has been immeasurable.

We **CANNOT** let this bill die in session again this year, knowing that if we do, we will **CERTAINLY** continue to lose more individuals to suicide in upcoming years.

Research done across the United States and internationally has repeatedly demonstrated the efficacy of barriers on bridges in reducing suicide rates. Barriers have consistently demonstrated approximately a 90% reduction in deaths from bridges when they have been installed. 90% of individuals who attempt suicide once do not go on to die by suicide, countering the argument that people will "Find a way". Most suicidal impulses are transient, with 24% of individuals contemplating their action for 5 minutes or less and 70% of people contemplating for 1 hour or less. Barriers buy people TIME and opportunity to reach out for help.

Please advance H8148 this session. We cannot in good conscience continue to let our bridges be unprotected, knowing that our community members will continue to go there in a desperate moment.

I am highly motivated to do whatever it takes to get this bill advanced. We **CANNOT** just accept that Rhode Islanders are going to continue to die on these bridges, which is what letting this legislation die means.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss this further.

Respectfully,

Rachel Mihalos, East Providence, RI