

HOUSE No. 1640

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Natalie M. Higgins

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to preventing suicide.

PETITION OF:

| NAME: | DISTRICT/ADDRESS: | DATE ADDED: |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| <i>Natalie M. Higgins</i> | <i>4th Worcester</i> | <i>1/29/2021</i> |
| <i>Steven G. Xiarhos</i> | <i>5th Barnstable</i> | <i>2/26/2021</i> |

HOUSE No. 1640

By Ms. Higgins of Leominster, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1640) of Natalie M. Higgins and Steven G. Xiarhos relative to preventing suicide. The Judiciary.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 4186 OF 2019-2020.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)**

An Act relative to preventing suicide.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Chapter 265 of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 16 the
2 following section:-

3 Section 16A. (a) For the purposes of this section, the following words shall have the
4 following meanings:

5 “Suicide”, death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with intent to die as a result of
6 the behavior.

7 “Suicide attempt”, a non-fatal, self-directed, potentially injurious behavior with intent to
8 die as a result of the behavior, regardless of whether the behavior actually results in physical
9 injury.

10 “Suicidal ideation”, thinking about, considering, or planning suicide.

11 “Knowledge of suicidal ideation”, actual knowledge of prior attempts to die from suicide;
12 of a person’s planned methods to die from suicide; that a person intends to die from or attempt to
13 die from suicide; or that a person has expressed such suicidal inclinations.

14 (b) A person shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison for not more than 5
15 years if they know of another person’s propensity for suicidal ideation and either:

16 (1) (i) Exercise substantial control over the other person through control of the other
17 person’s physical location or circumstances; deceptive or fraudulent manipulation of the other
18 person’s fears, affections, or sympathies; or undue influence whereby the will of 1 person is
19 substituted for the wishes of another;

20 (ii) intentionally coerces or encourages that person to commit or attempt to commit
21 suicide; and

22 (iii) as a result of the coercion or encouragement, in whole or in part, that other person
23 commits or attempts to commit suicide; or

24 (2) (i) Intentionally provides the physical means, or knowledge of such means, to the
25 other person for the purpose of enabling that other person to commit or attempt to commit
26 suicide and, as a result, the other person commits or attempts to commit suicide; or

27 (ii) participates in a physical act which causes, aids, encourages or assists the other
28 person in committing or attempting to commit suicide.

29 (c) This section shall not apply to a medical treatment lawfully administered by, or in a
30 manner prescribed by, a licensed physician.