

**SENATE . . . . . No. 1134**

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

*James B. Eldridge*

*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 passage of the accompanying resolve:

Resolve An Act establishing a special commission on prisoner and correctional officer suicides.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>
<i>Michael Barrett</i>	<i>Third Middlesex</i>
<i>Ellen Story</i>	<i>3rd Hampshire</i>
<i>Byron Rushing</i>	<i>9th Suffolk</i>
<i>Jennifer E. Benson</i>	<i>37th Middlesex</i>

**SENATE . . . . . No. 1134**

By Mr. Eldridge, a petition (accompanied by resolve, Senate, No. 1134) of James B. Eldridge, Michael Barrett, Ellen Story, Byron Rushing and others for legislation to establish a special commission on inmate and prisoner suicides. Public Safety and Homeland Security.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION

SEE

□ □ SENATE  
□ , NO. 1209 OF 2011-2012.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the Year Two Thousand Thirteen**

Resolve An Act establishing a special commission on prisoner and correctional officer suicides.

- 1 Resolved,
- 2 SECTION 1. There shall be a special commission to study the prevention of suicide
- 3 amongst prisoners and correctional officers in Massachusetts correctional facilities. The
- 4 commission shall consist of the secretary of the executive office of public safety or the
- 5 secretary’s designee who shall serve as chair; the commissioner of the department of mental
- 6 health or the commissioner’s designee; one person to be appointed by the president of the senate;
- 7 one person to be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives; four persons to be
- 8 appointed by the governor, one of whom shall be a representative of a legal advocacy
- 9 organization that has expertise with issues related to prisons and prisoners, one of whom shall be
- 10 a representative of a community organization or public agency that works with prisoners and
- 11 their families, one of whom shall be a representative of an organization that specializes in suicide
- 12 prevention and one of whom shall be a representative of an organization that represents
- 13 Massachusetts corrections officers. Each member shall serve without compensation.
- 14 The commission shall review the state of suicide prevention programs in Massachusetts’
- 15 correctional facilities and develop model plans, recommend program changes, highlight budget
- 16 priorities and recommend best practices that could be utilized to reduce instances of prisoner and
- 17 correctional officer suicide, and attempted suicide. The commission shall: (1) examine and
- 18 evaluate the state of jail and prison suicide prevention policies in the commonwealth; (2)

19 examine and evaluate suicide prevention training for correctional facility staff personnel in the  
20 commonwealth; (3) develop recommendations on ways in which correctional facilities can  
21 improve intake screening and bookkeeping; (4) examine and develop recommendations on  
22 methods by which correctional facilities may improve identification, referral, and evaluation of  
23 individual suicide risk; (5) provide recommendations for improving communication between  
24 detention facility staff and arresting and/or transporting officers, as well as between detention  
25 facility staff and potentially suicidal inmates; (6) examine and develop recommendations on  
26 methods by which correctional facilities may improve housing designated for inmates identified  
27 as suicidal; (7) provide recommendations for improving observation and treatment plans for  
28 inmates identified as suicidal; (8) provide recommendations for improving suicide intervention;  
29 and (9) examine and develop recommendations for how correctional facilities may improve or  
30 establish practices of postmortem notification, reporting, and mortality-morbidity reviewing. (10)  
31 develop recommendations for the provision of mental health counseling services to corrections  
32 officers that have a need for such services. (11) examine ways in which correctional facilities can  
33 reduce stress, anxiety, and depression among corrections officers. (12) examine training  
34 programs for incoming corrections officers and develop recommendations for programs to  
35 include a discussion of mental preparedness.

36           The commission may hold public hearings to assist in the collection and evaluation of  
37 data and testimony.

38           The commission shall submit its findings and recommendations relative to suicide  
39 prevention, together with drafts of legislation necessary to carry those recommendations into  
40 effect, by filing the same with the clerks of the house of representatives and senate, the house  
41 and senate committees on ways and means, the joint committee on public safety and homeland  
42 security, and the joint committee on mental health and substance abuse not later than March 31,  
43 2014.