

**SENATE . . . . . No. 1303**

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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 adoption of the accompanying resolve:

Resolve establishing a special commission on prisoner and correction officer suicides.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>	
<i>Barbara A. L'Italien</i>	<i>Second Essex and Middlesex</i>	<i>1/30/2017</i>
<i>Jason M. Lewis</i>	<i>Fifth Middlesex</i>	<i>1/30/2017</i>
<i>Walter F. Timilty</i>	<i>Norfolk, Bristol and Plymouth</i>	<i>2/1/2017</i>
<i>Sal N. DiDomenico</i>	<i>Middlesex and Suffolk</i>	<i>2/2/2017</i>

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By Mr. Eldridge, a petition (accompanied by resolve, Senate, No. 1303) of James B. Eldridge, Barbara A. L'Italien, Jason M. Lewis, Walter F. Timilty and others for legislation to establish a special commission on prisoner and correction officer suicides. Public Safety and Homeland Security.

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the One Hundred and Ninetieth General Court  
(2017-2018)**

Resolve establishing a special commission on prisoner and correction officer suicides.

1           **Resolved**, There shall be a special commission to study the prevention of suicide among  
2 prisoners and correction officers in Massachusetts correctional facilities. The commission shall  
3 consist of the secretary of the executive office of public safety or the secretary’s designee who  
4 shall serve as chair; the commissioner of the department of correction or the commissioner’s  
5 designee; the commissioner of the department of mental health or the commissioner’s designee;  
6 one person to be appointed by the president of the senate; one person to be appointed by the  
7 speaker of the house of representatives; 5 persons to be appointed by the governor, 1 of whom  
8 shall be a representative of a legal advocacy organization that has expertise with issues related to  
9 prisons and prisoners, 1 of whom shall be a representative of a community organization or public  
10 agency that works with prisoners and their families, 1 of whom shall be a representative of an  
11 organization that specializes in suicide prevention, 1 of whom shall be a representative of an  
12 organization that represents Massachusetts correction officers, and 1 of whom shall be a  
13 representative of an organization that represents Massachusetts sheriffs. Each member shall serve  
14 without compensation.

15           The commission shall review the state of suicide prevention programs in Massachusetts’  
16   correctional facilities and develop model plans, recommend program changes, highlight budget  
17   priorities and recommend best practices that could be utilized to reduce instances of prisoner and  
18   correction officer suicide, and attempted suicide. The commission shall: (1) examine and  
19   evaluate the state of jail and prison suicide prevention policies in the commonwealth; (2)  
20   examine and evaluate suicide prevention training for correctional facility staff in the  
21   commonwealth; (3) develop recommendations on ways in which correctional facilities can  
22   improve intake screening and bookkeeping; (4) examine and develop recommendations on  
23   methods by which correctional facilities may improve identification, referral, and evaluation of  
24   individual suicide risk; (5) provide recommendations for improving communication between  
25   detention facility staff and arresting or transporting officers, as well as between detention facility  
26   staff and potentially suicidal inmates; (6) examine and develop recommendations on methods by  
27   which correctional facilities may improve housing designated for inmates that are identified as  
28   suicidal; (7) provide recommendations for improving observation and treatment plans for  
29   inmates identified as suicidal; (8) provide recommendations for improving suicide intervention;  
30   (9) examine and develop recommendations for how correctional facilities may improve or  
31   establish practices of postmortem notification, reporting, and mortality-morbidity reviewing;  
32   (10) develop recommendations for the provision of mental health counseling services to  
33   correction officers that have a need for such services; (11) examine ways in which correctional  
34   facilities can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression among correction officers; and (12) examine  
35   training programs for incoming correction officers and develop recommendations for programs  
36   to include a discussion of mental preparedness.

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

39           The commission shall submit its findings and recommendations relative to suicide  
40 prevention, together with drafts of legislation necessary to carry those recommendations into  
41 effect, by filing the same with the clerks of the house of representatives and senate, the house  
42 and senate committees on ways and means, the joint committee on public safety and homeland  
43 security, and the joint committee on mental health and substance abuse not later than March 31,  
44 2019.