

SENATE No. 1134

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 correctional officer suicides.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>
<i>Michael J. 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 other members of the General Court 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 establishing a special commission on prisoner and correctional officer suicides.

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

13 The commission shall review the state of suicide prevention programs in Massachusetts’
14 correctional facilities and develop model plans, recommend program changes, highlight budget
15 priorities and recommend best practices that could be utilized to reduce instances of prisoner and
16 correctional officer suicide, and attempted suicide. The commission shall: (1) examine and
17 evaluate the state of jail and prison suicide prevention policies in the commonwealth; (2)
18 examine and evaluate suicide prevention training for correctional facility staff personnel in the
19 commonwealth; (3) develop recommendations on ways in which correctional facilities can

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

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

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