

# 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 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

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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.

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[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE SENATE, NO. 1209 OF 2011-2012.]

## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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In the Year Two Thousand Thirteen  
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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

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

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

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