

SENATE No. 1303

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>

SENATE No. 1303

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.

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.