

SENATE No. 1143

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 bill:

An Act relative to equity in suicide prevention.

PETITION OF:

| NAME: | DISTRICT/ADDRESS: | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| <i>James B. Eldridge</i> | <i>Middlesex and Worcester</i> | |
| <i>Michael O. Moore</i> | <i>Second Worcester</i> | <i>1/30/2019</i> |
| <i>Bruce E. Tarr</i> | <i>First Essex and Middlesex</i> | <i>1/30/2019</i> |
| <i>Denise Provost</i> | <i>27th Middlesex</i> | <i>1/31/2019</i> |

SENATE No. 1143

By Mr. Eldridge, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 1143) of James B. Eldridge, Michael O. Moore, Bruce E. Tarr and Denise Provost for legislation relative to equity in suicide prevention. Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court
(2019-2020)**

An Act relative to equity in suicide prevention.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 69 of the Acts of 2018 is hereby amended by striking out section
2 219 in its entirety and inserting in place thereof the following:-

3 Section 219. (a) There shall be a special commission to study the prevention of suicide
4 among prisoners and correction officers in Massachusetts correctional facilities. The commission
5 shall consist of 13 members: 1 of whom shall be the secretary of the executive office of public
6 safety or the secretary’s designee who shall serve as chair; 1 of whom shall be the commissioner
7 of the department of correction or the commissioner’s designee; 1 of whom shall be the
8 commissioner of the department of public health or the commissioner’s designee; 1 of whom
9 shall be the commissioner of the department of mental health or the commissioner’s designee; 1
10 of whom shall be a person appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives; 1 of whom
11 shall be a person appointed by the minority leader in the house of representatives; 1 of whom
12 shall be a person appointed by the president of the senate; 1 of whom shall be a person appointed

13 by the minority leader of the senate; 1 of whom shall be appointed by the president of the
14 Massachusetts correction officers federated union or their designee; 1 of whom shall be
15 appointed by the president of the Massachusetts Psychological Society or designee; 1 of whom
16 shall be appointed by the president of the New England Police Benevolent Association, Inc., or
17 designee; and 4 persons appointed by the governor, 1 of whom shall be a representative of a legal
18 advocacy organization that has expertise with issues related to prisons and prisoners, 1 of whom
19 shall be a representative of a community organization or public agency that works with prisoners
20 and their families, 1 of whom shall be a representative of an organization that specializes in
21 suicide prevention, and 1 of whom shall be a representative of an organization that represents
22 Massachusetts sheriffs. Each member shall serve without compensation.

23 (b) The commission shall review the state of suicide prevention programs in
24 Massachusetts' correctional facilities and develop model plans, recommend program changes,
25 highlight budget priorities and recommend best practices that could be utilized to reduce prisoner
26 and correction officer suicide and attempted suicide. The commission shall: (i) examine and
27 evaluate the current jail and prison suicide prevention policies; (ii) examine and evaluate suicide
28 prevention training for correctional facility staff; (iii) develop recommendations for improving
29 correctional facility intake screening and bookkeeping; (iv) examine and develop
30 recommendations for improving identification, referral, and evaluation of individual suicide risk;
31 (v) provide recommendations for improving communication between detention facility staff and
32 arresting or transporting officers, as well as between detention facility staff and potentially
33 suicidal inmates; (vi) examine and develop recommendations for improving housing designated
34 for inmates that are identified as suicidal; (vii) develop recommendations for improving
35 observation and treatment plans for inmates identified as suicidal; (viii) provide

36 recommendations for improving suicide identification and intervention; (ix) develop
37 recommendations for providing mental health counseling services to correction officers that have
38 a need for such services; (x) examine ways in which correctional facilities can reduce stress,
39 anxiety and depression among correction officers; and (xi) examine training programs for
40 incoming correction officers and develop recommendations for programs to include a discussion
41 of mental preparedness.

42 (c) The commission may hold public hearings to assist in the collection and evaluation of
43 data and testimony.