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Legislative Impact Statement

To: Chairperson Marvin L. Abney
From: Elisabeth Hubbard, Executive Secretary

Friday, May 17, 2024

The Governor's Commission on Disabilities' Legislation Committee has developed a Legislative Impact Statement on the bill listed below. The Commission would be pleased to present testimony to the committee. Please contact me (462-0112) if testimony is desired or for additional information.

24 HOUSE 7858 AN ACT RELATING TO HIGHWAYS - RHODE ISLAND TURNPIKE AND BRIDGE AUTHORITY

Introduced by Representative Solomon

This bill directs the Rhode Island turnpike and bridge authority (RITBA) design a safety barrier or netting system on the several bridges within its authority.

The Legislation Committee finds this bill beneficial.

The Commission supports this bill as it would help prevent suicide. Below is an excerpt from the Harvard School of Public Health explaining the correlation.

"Bridges and Suicide

Jumping from a great height shares two elements in common with firearms as a suicide method: it is a highly lethal method and once the attempt is begun (the person jumps or pulls the trigger) it cannot be stopped. Most other methods allow the suicide attempter a window of opportunity to change their mind or be rescued mid-attempt. Some communities have erected barriers at popular suicide jump sites. Barriers have been largely effective in stopping or dramatically reducing suicide deaths from that jump spot. Most studies have also found that erecting a barrier does not result in more jumps from nearby sites. Is there a commensurate increase in deaths by other methods? Evidence is weaker on this point – some studies have found no increase, one found some evidence for males and none for females, others either did not examine this or did not have enough statistical power to examine this (since jumps do not make up a large proportion of suicides in most areas). One study, the Bloor Viaduct study, did find that jumps from other sites increased after a barrier was erected. This is not unexpected if

very nearby sites offer equal advantages (great height-which ensures high lethality-and easy access). Media publicity about jump suicides may also have played a role in the increase at other jump sites."

Source: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter/bridges-and-suicide/>

CC: Representative Solomon
Rico Vota, Governor's Office of Legislative Affairs