

Support Report Language to Prioritize Suicide Prevention Infrastructure for FY27

Facts



In the U.S. in 2024, **1,246** people died by suicide after falling from bridges and high places.¹



Conditions like depression, anxiety, and substance use problems, especially when unaddressed, **increase risk for suicide**.ⁱ That risk is greater when lethal means are readily accessible.^{2,3}



Reducing access to lethal means, such as tall bridges, is a proven, **research-supported component of suicide prevention**.⁴



Architectural barriers are an **effective and relatively low-cost way to save lives**.



Barriers give individuals who are suffering from suicidal thoughts and their loved ones time, **allowing for the intense suicidal risk to diminish** and for someone to intervene with mental health support and resources.⁵

¹ National Vital Statistics System, Mortality 2024 on CDC WISQARS database. Data are from the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) mortality data files. <https://wisqars.cdc.gov/about/fatal-injury-data/>

² American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. (2023). Understanding firearms and suicide prevention. <https://afsp.org/an-introduction-to-firearms-and-suicide-prevention>

³ Miller, M., & Hemenway, D. (1999). The relationship between firearms and suicide: A review of the literature. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 4(1), 59-75. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1359-1789\(97\)00057-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1359-1789(97)00057-8)

⁴ Studdert, D. M., Zhang, Y., Swanson, S. A., Prince, L., Rodden, J. A., Holsinger, E. E., Spittal, M. J., Wintemute, G. J., & Miller, M. (2020). Handgun Ownership and Suicide in California. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 382(23), 2220-2229

⁵ Yip, P.S.F, Yousuf, S., & Chang, S., et al. (2018). Means restriction for suicide prevention. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6191653/>

⁶ Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. (2023). Means reduction saves lives. Retrieved from <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter/means-matter/saves-lives/>

Without DOT Action, High-Risk Infrastructure Will Remain Unaddressed

Suicide by jumping from transportation-related structures is a public health and safety issue, with strong evidence demonstrating that physical deterrents save lives without unintended consequences.

Specifically, the report language would:

- Encourage the Secretary of Transportation to **support and prioritize** the installation of suicide-deterrent infrastructure, such as barriers, nets, and safety fencing, on bridges, rail corridors, and other transportation-related facilities with documented suicide risk, through existing safety and capital programs
- Promote the **sharing of best practices** among the Department of Transportation (DOT) and its modal administrations on evidence-based suicide-deterrent interventions
- Direct the Secretary to **submit a report to Congress** within 180 days of enactment detailing actions taken, including identification of high-risk facilities, available funding mechanisms, evaluation efforts, and dissemination of best practices

Installing barriers is an evidence-based, cost-effective intervention that creates time for help to arrive and saves lives.

