October 15, 2026

The Honorable Alex Padilla
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thom Tillis
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Padilla and Senator Tillis:

On behalf of the Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG), a coalition of national organizations representing individuals and families experiencing mental health and substance use challenges, mental health and substance use treatment providers, advocates, and other stakeholders, we write in strong support of the *Barriers to Suicide Act of 2026* (S. 5558). We applaud your commitment to stopping suicide, and are proud to endorse your legislation to aid state, local and Tribal governments in providing evidence-based, life-saving nets and barriers on bridges and other high-risk structures.

In 2024, 48, 824 individuals died by suicide in the United States. Of these lives tragically lost to suicide, 1,246 died by falling from bridges and other high places.[1] While this is a troubling trend, suicide can be prevented through effective intervention and prevention methods. For bridges and other publicly accessible areas of significant height, installing barriers and nets can act as a delay or deterrent to an individual at risk, providing more time to get through the intense, often brief, moment of crisis.

The moments leading up to a suicide attempt are the most critical, and are ripe for intervention and prevention. Removing or limiting access to lethal means in the moments before a suicide attempt can deter the crisis and provide valuable time for the individual to receive support and bypass acting on a suicidal impulse. According to the Lifeline Steering Committee, established by the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (now the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline), the most effective way to prevent suicide-by-jumping from bridges is by implementing bridge barriers.[2]

The *Barriers to Suicide Act* would help communities across the country install barriers and nets on bridges, buildings, parking garages, highway-rail grade crossings, and rail stations. The competitive grant program established by this legislation will help to address the ongoing suicide crisis in this country by allowing states and localities to apply for federal funding to support the installation of suicide deterrents. Priority will be given to projects located in an area with a high rate of suicide or other priority characteristics determined by the Secretary of Transportation.

Importantly, the bill also establishes a study by the Government Accountability Office to explore other deterrents that are effective on these structures, as well as which structures besides bridges tend to attract high number of deaths-by-suicide. This study will help inform the most effective means of

[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] Draper, John, Ph.D., Director, National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. "Suicide Prevention on Bridges: The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Position" (Revised January 2017). https://988lifeline.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Suicide-Bridges-National-Suicide-Prevention-Lifeline-Position-2017-FINAL.pdf (Accessed September 16, 2025).

preventing suicides on bridges and other high structures, helping to save lives and giving us more options for future methods of reducing access to these lethal means during a moment of suicidal crisis.

Thank you again for your leadership on this important legislation. We look forward to working with you and your staff to enact this bill this Congress.

Sincerely,

Active Minds
American Academy of Nursing
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work
American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists (AAPP)
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Mental Health Counselors Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association Services
Anxiety and Depression Association of America
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)
Children's Hospital Association
Clinical Social Work Association
Crisis Residential Association
Crisis Text Line
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
Inseparable
International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance
Mental Health America
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association for Rural Mental Health (NARMH)
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors (NACBHDD)
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Board for Certified Counselors & Affiliates
National Council for Mental Wellbeing
National Eating Disorders Association
National Federation of Families
National League for Nursing
Policy Center for Maternal Mental Health
Psychotherapy Action Network (PsiAN)
Sandy Hook Promise

The Jed Foundation
Treatment Advocacy Center (TAC)
Trust for America's Health