

HOUSE No. 1896

By Mr. Rushing of Boston, petition of Byron Rushing and others relative to the treatment of prisoners. Mental Health and Substance Abuse.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PETITION OF:

Byron Rushing	Gloria L. Fox
Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.	Benjamin Swan
Carl M. Sciortino, Jr.	Willie Mae Allen
Douglas W. Petersen	William Lantigua
Frank I. Smizik	Elizabeth A. Malia
Jennifer L. Flanagan	Alice K. Wolf
Kay Khan	Cleon H. Turner
Dianne Wilkerson	John W. Scibak
Joyce A. Spiliotis	Denise Provost
William N. Brownsberger	Ellen Story
Ruth B. Balsler	

In the Year Two Thousand and Seven.

AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS.

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

- 1 Chapter 127 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding
- 2 after Section 32 the following new section:—
- 3 Section 32A. TREATMENT OF EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED
- 4 PRISONERS.
- 5 (A) Prohibitions Concerning Intervention for Suicide Attempts
- 6 and Self-Mutilation.
- 7 (1) A prisoner who either commits self-mutilation or attempts sui-
- 8 cide shall not be disciplined or punished for such behavior, nor shall
- 9 the prisoner be segregated or isolated except to the extent specifi-
- 10 cally authorized by medical staff for treatment. The use of “closed
- 11 solid door isolation,” so-called, to punish or manage suicidal or self-
- 12 mutilating prisoners is specifically prohibited.
- 13 (B) Requirements Concerning Intervention for Suicide Attempts
- 14 and Self-Mutilation.

15 (1) The commissioner shall require that the following steps be
16 taken to insure appropriate responses to suicide attempts. Institu-
17 tional staff will be trained in techniques for responding to suicide
18 attempts and self-mutilation that ensure the safe and quick extrica-
19 tion of prisoners who hang themselves and the provision of neces-
20 sary first aid. A prisoner who commits self-mutilation or attempts
21 suicide shall immediately receive appropriate medical attention and
22 shall be interviewed by a licensed psychiatrist within twelve hours
23 of the incident, which interview shall be logged in the inmate's med-
24 ical record and in the block log where the prisoner is located at the
25 time of the interview.