117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 111

To direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish a grant program to facilitate the installation, on bridges, of evidence-based suicide deterrents, including suicide prevention nets and barriers, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Beyer introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on __________________

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish a grant program to facilitate the installation, on bridges, of evidence-based suicide deterrents, including suicide prevention nets and barriers, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Barriers to Suicide Act of 2021”.
SEC. 2. GRANT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall establish a program (in this section referred to as the “Program”) to facilitate the installation of evidence-based suicide deterrents on bridges, including suicide prevention nets and barriers.

(b) GRANT AUTHORITY.—In carrying out the Program, the Secretary may make grants on a competitive basis in accordance with this section.

(c) ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS.—The Secretary may make a grant under the Program to a State or a political subdivision of a State.

(d) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible for a grant under the Program, an entity described in subsection (c) shall submit to the Secretary an application in such form, at such time, and containing such information as the Secretary determines appropriate.

(e) ELIGIBLE PROJECTS.—The Secretary may make a grant under the Program only for a project that facilitates the installation on a bridge of—

(1) a suicide prevention net;

(2) a suicide prevention barrier; or

(3) any other evidence-based suicide deterrent that is determined by the Secretary to be appropriate.
(f) PRIORITY.—In making a grant under the Program, the Secretary shall give priority to a project located in an area with a high rate of suicide or other priority characteristics, as determined by the Secretary.

(g) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of the cost of a project assisted with a grant under the Program may not exceed 80 percent.

(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) STATE.—The term “State” means each State of the United States, the District of Columbia, each commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States, and each federally recognized Indian Tribe.

(2) EVIDENCE-BASED SUICIDE DETERRENT.—The term “evidence-based suicide deterrent” means a suicide deterrent that demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such deterrent is likely to reduce or prevent suicide, and includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such deterrent.

(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out the Program $10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2020 through 2024.
SEC. 3. TITLE 23 AMENDMENTS.

(a) National Highway Performance Program.—Section 119(d)(2)(I) of title 23, United States Code, is amended by striking “Highway System.” and adding “Highway System, including installation of safety barriers and nets on bridges of the National Highway System.”.

(b) Surface Transportation Block Grants.—Section 133(b)(4) of title 23, United States Code, is amended by striking “crossings.” and adding “crossings and installation of safety barriers and nets on bridges.”.

SEC. 4. STUDY ON EFFECTIVENESS OF SUICIDE PREVENTION NETS AND BARRIERS FOR STRUCTURES OTHER THAN BRIDGES.

(a) Study.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study to identify—

(1) the types of structures, other than bridges, that attract a high number of individuals attempting suicide-by-jumping;

(2) the characteristics that distinguish structures identified under paragraph (1) from similar structures that do not attract a high number of individuals attempting suicide-by-jumping;

(3) the types of nets or barriers that are effective at reducing suicide-by-jumping with respect to the structures identified under paragraph (1);
(4) methods of reducing suicide-by-jumping
with respect to the structures identified under para-
graph (1) other than nets and barriers;
(5) quantitative measures of the effectiveness of
the nets and barriers identified under paragraph (3);
(6) quantitative measures of the effectiveness of
the additional methods identified under paragraph
(4);
(7) the entities that typically install the nets
and barriers identified under paragraph (3); and
(8) the costs of the nets and barriers identified
under paragraph (3).

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date
of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall
submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infra-
structure and the Committee on Energy and Commerce
of the House of Representatives and the Committee on
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and the Com-
mittee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the
Senate a report on the results of the study conducted
under subsection (a).