

HOUSE No. 1947

By Mr. Rushing of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1947) of Byron Rushing and others relative to the treatment of emotionally disturbed prisoners. Mental Health and Substance Abuse.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Byron Rushing

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled;

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to the treatment of prisoners.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Byron Rushing	9th Suffolk
Kay Khan	11th Middlesex
Pam Richardson	6th Middlesex
Gale D. Candaras	First Hampden and Hampshire
Ellen Story	3rd Hampshire
Joyce A. Spiliotis	12th Essex
Frank I. Smizik	15th Norfolk
Benjamin Swan	11th Hampden
Elizabeth A. Malia	11th Suffolk
William Lantigua	16th Essex
Carl M. Sciortino, Jr.	34th Middlesex
John W. Scibak	2nd Hampshire
Steven J. D'Amico	4th Bristol
Ruth B. Balsler	12th Middlesex
Alice K. Wolf	25th Middlesex
Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.	26th Middlesex
William N. Brownsberger	24th Middlesex
Denise Provost	27th Middlesex
Cleon H. Turner	1st Barnstable

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

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 SECTION 1. Chapter 127 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding after
2 Section 32 the following new section:—
3 Section 32A. TREATMENT OF EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED PRISONERS

4 (A) Prohibitions Concerning Intervention for Suicide Attempts and Self-Mutilation

5 (1) A prisoner who either commits self-mutilation or attempts suicide shall not be disciplined
6 or punished for such behavior, nor shall the prisoner be segregated or isolated except to the
7 extent specifically authorized by medical staff for treatment. The use of “closed solid door
8 isolation,” so-called, to punish or manage suicidal or self-mutilating prisoners is specifically
9 prohibited.

10 (B) Requirements Concerning Intervention for Suicide Attempts and Self-Mutilation

11 (1) The commissioner shall require that the following steps be taken to insure appropriate
12 responses to suicide attempts. Institutional staff will be trained in techniques for responding
13 to suicide attempts and self-mutilation that ensure the safe and quick extrication of prisoners
14 who hang themselves and the provision of necessary first aid. A prisoner who commits self-
15 mutilation or attempts suicide shall immediately receive appropriate medical attention and
16 shall be interviewed by a licensed mental health professional within twelve hours of the
17 incident, which interview shall be logged in the inmate’s medical record and in the block log
18 where the prisoner is located at the time of the interview.