

Date of Hearing: April 20, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Lori D. Wilson, Chair

AB 2267 (Garcia) – As Amended March 24, 2026

SUBJECT: State bridges and overpasses: suicide prevention

SUMMARY: Requires the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), on or before July 1, 2029, and in consultation with the State Department of Public Health (DPH) and in collaboration with impacted local governments, to develop and maintain a set of preapproved suicide prevention safety-barrier designs that local governments may use to install suicide prevention barriers.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Provides Caltrans the full possession and control of all state highways and property and rights in property acquired for state highway purposes, construct all state highways (Streets and Highways Code (SHC) §90).
- 2) Requires Caltrans, by July 1, 2028, in consultation with DPH and in collaboration with impacted local governments, to incorporate:
 - a) Suicide deterrent considerations in the updates of applicable guidance documents; and,
 - b) The suicide deterrent considerations shall include, but not be limited to, the evaluation and adoption of guidance for countermeasures that may deter suicide attempts on bridges and overpasses on the state highway system, including the design, placement, and modification of barriers, fencing, and other infrastructure (SHC §92.7).
- 3) Requires Caltrans, by July 1, 2028, in consultation with DPH and behavioral health experts, to identify best practices for the implementation of suicide countermeasures designed to deter suicide attempts on bridges and overpasses. In evaluating appropriate physical infrastructure, design features, and related deterrent measures, Caltrans must consider feedback from local jurisdictions and other stakeholders (SHC §92.8).
- 4) Requires Caltrans to install and maintain screening on state freeway overpasses to prevent objects from being dropped or thrown on vehicles passing underneath. (SHC §92.6).
- 5) Authorizes DPH to establish the Office of Suicide Prevention and authorizes the office to perform certain functions including the following:
 - a) Provide information and technical assistance to statewide and regional partners regarding best practices on suicide prevention policies and programs;
 - b) Conduct state-level assessment regional and statewide suicide prevention policies and practices;
 - c) Monitor and disseminate data to inform prevention efforts at the state and local levels;
 - d) Convene experts and stakeholders, including, but not limited to, stakeholders representing populations with high rates of suicide, to encourage collaboration and coordination of resources for suicide prevention; and,

- e) Report on progress to reduce rates of suicide. (Health and Safety Code §131300)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: *According to the author*, “Suicide at freeway overpasses is an urgent public health crisis. In Rancho Cucamonga alone, multiple suicides and attempts have occurred in recent years, including the loss of two high school students at the same location within two weeks of each other in 2024, and several more attempts including one just weeks ago. Many local governments are willing to take decisive action and are willing to pay to do so but face a broken approval process. When the City of Rancho Cucamonga committed its own funds to install suicide prevention barriers in response to these repeated tragedies, the Caltrans design approval process took nearly a year, during which additional attempts occurred.

The CDC's Suicide Prevention Resource for Action identifies ‘creating protective environments’ as a key strategy for reducing suicide. AB 2267 advances that goal by requiring Caltrans to establish pre-approved barrier designs, so that willing jurisdictions can act immediately, cutting through burdensome regulatory delay to save lives.”

Suicide barriers are an effective deterrent. According to a January 2026 “Injury Data Brief” published by DPH, suicide is the leading cause of violent death in California, and self-harm is the third leading cause of injury-related emergency department visits. Suicide rates in California have been relatively stable from 2014 through 2023; in 2023, the rate was 10.7 per 100,000 residents or a total of 4,191. The Centers for Disease Prevention and Control has found that suicide is among the leading causes of death for children ages 10-14 and young adults 15-24. In California, those between 10-14 and 15-19 suffered the lowest suicide rates among all age groups in 2023 (1.7 and 6.8 per 100,000 residents or 44 and 179, respectively). Firearm and suffocation, respectively, rank as the first and second top mechanism of suicide death. Death by “fall” ranks the lowest at 4.5% of all suicide deaths in 2023; in 2021 and 2022, it was 5.0%.

A 2024 review published in the Journal of Preventive Medicine Reports found that physical barriers are effective at reducing suicides by jumping from high-risk areas, deterring high risk individuals and allowing additional time for intervention by bystanders or law enforcement. The review also found that physical deterrents generally did not result in suicide attempts at other locations or by other methods, and in certain circumstances even reduced suicide rates to zero.

In January 2024, a continuous physical suicide barrier was installed on the full length of the 1.7-mile span of the Golden Gate Bridge. Since its installation, the bridge has seen a reduction of suicides by 73% and suicide attempts by 34%. Caltrans is currently developing suicide deterrent systems for the San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge (expected to begin construction in late 2026) and Arroyo Simi Overhead Bridge on State Route 118 in Ventura County (expected to complete construction in May 2026).

Incidents in Rancho Cucamonga. According to the City of Rancho Cucamonga (City), the sponsor of this bill, the two suicides in September 2024 referenced above occurred on a Caltrans-owned overpass on Haven Avenue crossing Interstate 210. In response, the City worked with Caltrans to install suicide prevention signage and a barrier, both necessitating permits or approvals from Caltrans. However, according to the City, it took nearly nine months for Caltrans

to review and approve its barrier design application (the barrier was installed in November 2025), a process that the City says was time consuming and frustrating.

In a June 2025 op-ed, Shannon Dicus, San Bernardino County Sheriff stated that in the prior eight months, "...there have been at least ten separate incidents involving individuals either falling or attempting to fall from freeway overpasses in Rancho Cucamonga."

As stated by the author: "The core problem this bill seeks to remedy is not funding, it is process. While cities like Rancho Cucamonga are prepared and willing to fund these improvements themselves, what these communities cannot afford is a year-long, case-by-case design and approval process while a preventable danger persists."

This bill requires Caltrans, by January 1, 2029, to develop and maintain a set of preapproved suicide prevention safety-barrier designs that local governments may use to install suicide prevention barriers at state-owned bridges and overpasses. The author asserts that by establishing statewide design standards and offering pre-approved barrier designs, "...a city will be able to select a pre-approved design that fits its specific overpass, move directly to implementation, and install life-saving infrastructure in a fraction of the time currently required."

Nothing in the bill, however, would exempt a local government from Caltrans's existing permit process governing the *installation* of a barrier but presumably preapproved barrier designs could lead to more expeditious permitting. According to Caltrans, in the case of the Haven Avenue overpass, concerns about structural integrity forced revisions in the barrier design. A timeline provided by the City also reflected months consumed by the City's contracting process, fencing fabrication, execution of a maintenance agreement with Caltrans, and inspection.

Related legislation. This bill follows on the heels of SB 800 (Reyes), Chapter 427, Statutes of 2025, also sponsored by the City of Rancho Cucamonga, which requires Caltrans, by July 1, 2028, in consultation with the State Department of Public Health, to incorporate suicide deterrent considerations in the updates of applicable guidance documents. These considerations must include the evaluation and adoption of guidance for countermeasures that may deter suicide attempts on bridges and overpasses on the state highway system, including the design, placement, and modification of barriers, fencing, and other infrastructure.

A related measure also signed last year, AB 440 (Ramos), Chapter 262, Statutes of 2025, requires Caltrans to identify best practices for the implementation of suicide countermeasures designed to deter suicide attempts on bridges and overpasses.

It is unclear if these measures, to be implemented one year prior to the effectiveness of this bill will include preapproved barrier designs but Caltrans has indicated they intend to incorporate guidance and best practices into its Highway Design Manual, which establishes uniform policies and procedures governing state highway design.

The Mayor of the City of Rancho Cucamonga, sponsor of this bill, writes in support: "Research consistently demonstrates that physical deterrents - such as safety barriers and fencing - are among the most effective tools for preventing suicide. The absence of these easily implementable and low-cost measures has contributed to an ongoing public safety and mental health crisis associated with suicides from freeway overpasses. Despite this evidence, local governments face significant barriers to implementation. Many bridges and overpasses are locally owned but cross

state highways, requiring involved, lengthy coordination with Caltrans, project-specific approvals, and additional and often redundant studies. Uncertainty around design standards, approval timelines, and acceptable barrier configurations often delays or prevents action, even when jurisdictions are prepared to self-fund improvements. The City of Rancho Cucamonga experienced these challenges firsthand during the installation of a critical suicide prevention barrier along the Interstate 210 corridor, highlighting the need for clearer guidance and more efficient processes.”

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**Support**

Bridge Rail Foundation
California Alliance of Child and Family Services
Children Now
San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
Ventura County Transportation Commission
L. Dennis Michael, Mayor, City of Rancho Cucamonga

Opposition

None on file

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