
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 440 (Ramos) - Suicide prevention

Version: April 10, 2025

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: July 14, 2025

Policy Vote: HEALTH 11 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Agnes Lee

Bill Summary: AB 440 would require the Office of Suicide Prevention to work in consultation with the Department of Transportation to identify cost-effective strategies to reduce suicides and suicide attempts on the state's bridges and roadways.

Fiscal Impact:

- The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) estimates annual General Fund costs of \$380,000 in 2026-27 and 2027-28, and \$190,000 in 2028-29 for staffing resources to conduct a comprehensive review of existing research and literature related to suicides and suicide attempts occurring on the state's bridges and roadways, consult with the Department of Transportation and suicide prevention subject matter experts, assess the current understanding of the cost-effectiveness of suicide prevention strategies, and complete the report to the Legislature.
- Caltrans estimates a one-time cost of approximately \$250,000 (State Highway Account) for staffing for data collection and sharing, and performing analysis to assist the Office of Suicide Prevention. Caltrans also notes potential significant cost pressures to the State Highway Account/Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account to the extent the recommendations would be implemented.

Background: Current law authorizes CDPH to establish the Office of Suicide Prevention and specifies that the responsibilities of the office may include the following:

- Providing information and technical assistance to statewide and regional partners regarding best practices on suicide prevention policies and programs.
- Conducting state level assessment of regional and statewide suicide prevention policies and practices, including other states' suicide prevention policies, and including specific metrics and domains as appropriate.
- Monitoring and disseminating data to inform prevention efforts at the state and local levels.
- Convening 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.
- Reporting on progress to reduce rates of suicide.

Current law provides that the Office of Suicide Prevention may share and receive data from all entities with data relevant to the responsibilities and objectives of the office, including, but not limited to, state, federal, local, and private and nongovernmental agencies or organizations.

Currently, Caltrans is required to install screening on state freeway overpasses where pedestrians are allowed to prevent objects from being dropped or thrown upon vehicles passing underneath. The locations are up to Caltrans' discretion but first consideration must be given to overpasses in urban areas. The Caltrans Highway Design Manual contains requirements for bridge barriers and railings. The railings are categorized into four classes based on their preventative function: vehicle barrier railings, combination vehicle barrier and pedestrian railings, pedestrian railings, and bicycle railings. According to Caltrans, overpasses with pedestrian access include fencing.

Proposed Law: Specific provisions of the bill would:

- Require the Office of Suicide Prevention to do both of the following:
 - Work in consultation with the Department of Transportation to identify cost-effective strategies to reduce suicides and suicide attempts on the state's bridges and roadways, including, but not limited to, infrastructure and other prevention strategies.
 - Prepare a report on the strategies it identifies and submit that report on or before December 31, 2027, to the Legislature, the Assembly Committee on Health, the Assembly Committee on Transportation, the Senate Committee on Health, and the Senate Transportation Committee.
- Repeal the provisions on January 1, 2029.

Related Legislation: SB 800 (Reyes) would require the Department of Transportation to: assess and determine appropriate mitigation measures to help prevent suicides on locally owned overpasses that have a history of suicide-related deaths, cross over state highways, and are in the state's right-of-way; consult with the Office of Suicide Prevention; and submit a report to the Legislature. The bill is currently in the Assembly Transportation Committee.

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