

Thank you first to the sponsoring delegates of the Vermont house for bringing this serious matter to the attention of the State of Vermont. I speak to you as the father of a victim of the Quechee Gorge Bridge, now notorious as a suicide hotspot. Those who live in other states and wish to end their lives know of this bridge as a place to be successful in that effort. Knowing it is preventable makes it all the more a true kick in the gut every time we wake up in the morning to hear the news that another person has decided to end their life there. My son probably had second thoughts after he climbed over the 46 inch high railing, second thoughts that other survivors of similar attempts at other bridges report when they don't follow through with the initial plan, or survive the fall through some miracle. The Quechee Gorge Bridge is not survivable due to lack of deep water, therefore, it is obvious to me that falling or jumping must be made impossible. I understand there are several plans drawn up that will make it safer for pedestrians and those who wish to do themselves harm already available. I do not believe any of the plans change the beauty of the Gorge in any way, and am saddened to hear that area businesses believe making a change will harm their business. Tourists don't drive from Providence or Boston or New York City to expressly see the Quechee Gorge. They happen to drive over it on their way through the state. It is essentially a rest area, as beautiful as it is, but a rest area nonetheless. And the road and bridge is going to be here for another century and beyond, which means, at the present rate of death by falling of one per year, another 100 people are going to be a victim of the Quechee Gorge Bridge in that time. Many of which my wife and I and Derek's identical twin brother will hear about on the news and have a really bad week afterward knowing that it could have been preventable. Yes, it's going to cost a little money, but it's a one time expenditure that will have lasting and positive results for years to come. The Quechee Gorge Bridge is the only place in Vermont where multiple suicides have

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March 8, 2016

happened....nowhere else in this state is there a suicide hotspot. And this one can be fixed so there are no hotspots in this beautiful state. I wish to stay here for many more years, and I'd like to know that a citizen can make a difference by bringing up an idea to his or her state representative and actually seeing it come to fruition. I would be honored to be taken seriously in this effort and I hope to see a quick resolution to this easily fixed issue. There are going to be more victims without mitigation, which is sad, because it is so preventable. Thank you again for allowing me to speak on behalf of my family, and particularly, my beautiful 21 year old son Derek, who can't speak for himself.