



## Bridge Rail Foundation Newsletter

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### Raise the Rail—Stop the Suicides

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### EIR and Hearings--Still on Hold

The long-awaited draft Environmental Impact Report on a suicide deterrent system for the Golden Gate Bridge has yet to be released. Bridge officials had planned the release for June but last minute glitches have delayed the release.



The draft EIR could come as early as July 9th, however that date is simply the current estimate.

Look for a special edition of the BRF Newsletter, when we actually have the news.

### Get updates directly from GGB

The bridge district has an email system that will send updates and announcements from time to time—including the dates and locations of the EIR hearings.

[Click here to link to the bridge district](#)

### The Hang up with Bridge Phones

In a major policy statement, The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline released a position paper addressing the debate over telephone hotlines on suicide-prone bridges vs. physical structures to prevent jumping.

Lifeline is a national organization of suicide prevention and crisis call centers—the very folks with the most experience in answering the calls of suicidal people. Their statement is unequivocal—taller railings prevent suicides, phone systems on bridges should be considered as supplemental only.



The paper reviews much of the published research behind the call for taller railings. Consider the conclusion of the paper:

"Based on the current state of the research, physical barriers are an effective means of preventing suicides on bridges. Further, there is no evidence that barriers on bridges lead to "method substitution" for would-be jumpers. In contrast, bridge phones and other "human barrier" methods have not shown comparable success in significantly reducing bridge suicides in any known situation where they have been implemented. In consulting with bridge or transportation authorities, it is therefore suggested that the Lifeline and its network of crisis centers recommend bridge barrier installation as the most effective bridge suicide prevention approach. In order to promote awareness of resources for help, it is further suggested that Lifeline and its network centers recommend that bridge or transportation authorities support the dissemination of public education materials, signage or other information about hotlines or other local suicide prevention assistance, as appropriate. However, the latter recommendation is best seen as a supplement to a barrier, as it alone is unlikely to significantly reduce bridge suicides. Above all, it should be made clear to inquiring authorities: **barriers are the most effective means of preventing suicides on bridges.**"

Lifeline's John Draper, PhD is the author of the paper. It includes an extended discussion debunking the claims of a UCSB professor who maintains that taller railings on bridges might not save lives and that suicidal individuals may simply substitute another method if a bridge jump site is not available. Draper points out that there is no evidence to support this claim, and many studies show just the opposite.

The entire document is posted to the Bridge Rail Foundation web site on the Press Room page.

[Click here to go to the BRF Press Room page.](#)

### Survivor Family Starts Online Petition

In November of 2007 the Whitmer family's youngest son, Matthew, disappeared. It is believed that he ended his life by jumping from the Golden Gate Bridge.

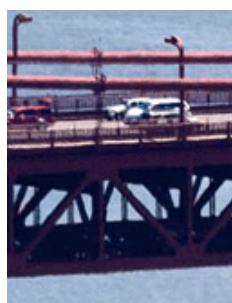
The family recently posted an online petition to urge the Golden Gate Bridge District to finally raise the rails and stop the suicides.

To read the petition and express your support, please:

[Click Here](#)

### The Most Lethal –GGB

The Associated Press recently offered a story related to guns, suicide and the recent Supreme Court decision. One paragraph discusses several means of suicide and states that suicide by gunshot is fatal in over 90% of the cases. Comparatively, jumping from high places is fatal 34% of the time while 2% of drug overdose attempts are fatal.



No doubt the national stats are right, but which high place a person jumps from—or simply how high it is—matters a great deal. There have been 1,300 confirmed suicide deaths from the Golden Gate Bridge—and additional deaths where no body was found or the actual jump site could not be confirmed. There have also been 28 individuals whose jump from the Bridge was not fatal. So we know the fatality rate of jumps from the Golden Gate Bridge—at least 97.85% are lethal.

Many supporters of raising the rail have suggested keeping the bridge with its short rail is like leaving a loaded gun on the street. Nope—it's probably worse.

### Berkeley Presentation & Survivor Meeting

Bridge Rail Foundation President Dave Hull and board member Kevin Hines will speak before the Berkeley Peace and Justice Committee. It's an open meeting set for July 11 at 7p.m. at St. Joseph the Worker Church, 1640 Addison St. (parking in school lot at McGee).

BRF Survivors (family and friends) will meet again this month—soon after the release of the bridge district EIR. For more information send us a note — [info@bridgerail.org](mailto:info@bridgerail.org)

### Help Us Fight to Raise the Rail

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