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I don't really want to be here today. In fact, I would give anything to not be here today.

My daughter Siri jumped from the Penobscot Narrows Bridge on November 15, 2021. Until that day, I never imagined that I would be in a position where I would feel compelled to testify about installing a suicide barrier on a bridge.

Her action came as a bolt out of the blue for me. Her suicide is with me, and with the others who loved her, every day. I hope that my speaking today can help to prevent even just one more person from jumping from that bridge and spare any other family from the pain experienced by loved ones who are left behind.

Since Siri's suicide, I have learned that suicide is often short-lived, a moment of crisis that passes. If the crisis is overcome, people who were suicidal at that point usually go on to lead normal productive lives. A suicide barrier would allow people that second chance.

I have also seen reports that restricting access to a suicide hotspot (which is what the Penobscot Narrows Bridge has become) does not shift the problem to another location.

A study done of the Memorial Bridge over the Kennebec River right here in Augusta from the years 1960 to 2005 reported 14 suicides from the bridge—all before the barrier safety fence was installed there in 1983, *none* in the 23 years after the barrier was installed. The safety fence was effective in preventing suicides from the bridge, and there was no evidence that suicidal individuals sought alternative sites for jumping.

I urge you to approve then fund a suicide prevention barrier for the Penobscot Narrows Bridge. You may save the life of a loved one, or certainly the life of someone's loved one.

Thank you very much to Senator Curry and the other sponsors of this legislation. I appreciate very much your work on this issue.