

Cara Dooley

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Dear members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

I am writing on behalf of myself and my family in support of Senate Bill 810, State Highway Administration - Electronic Signs Along Highways - Suicide Prevention. I would testify in person but I understand the nature of session at this time of year as well as concerns about COVID-19 transmission.

Our family was devastated on October 27th, 2017 when we lost our father, Michael Dooley, to suicide. He was a missing person for several days, so together with our county police, we worked hard to piece together his whereabouts on the day he died. We still wonder where he may have gone and what he was thinking. What we *do* know, from toll surveillance data, is that **our father drove his car over the bay bridge and back, twice**, potentially contemplating this method of suicide. It's an hour's trip each way.

We know that he slept very little the preceding week due to work-related stress. We also know, that, bizarrely, he returned some library books that day, and was seen going to and from our home between bay bridge trips. It seems likely that he was in a distraught, disorganized, and desperate state of mind.

We know that people who attempt and die by suicide often do so during moments of panic, despair, and impulsivity. Maybe if our dad had seen a sign, a literal sign, to make him stop and *think*, maybe things would be different. This vulnerable period is an opportunity to intercept individuals in crisis.

Our hope is to prevent others from experiencing the loss of a loved one in this terrible manner. We believe this bill, to place suicide prevention messaging in key highway areas like the bay bridge, could deter those in crisis and prevent deaths like our father's.

We thank Senator Waldstreicher for sponsoring this bill, and we thank you all for your consideration.

All the best,

Cara Dooley;

Elizabeth Dooley, Glen Burnie;

Christopher and Stephanie Dooley, Baltimore;

Kevin and Victoria Dooley, New Market;

Sean Dooley, Baltimore;

Ryan Dooley, Baltimore;

