



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 349

Resolution calling on the New York State Senate to pass S.5740 and the Governor to sign such legislation into law, which would amend the New York State Correction Law by enhancing training for staff in residential mental health treatment unit programs inside correctional facilities.

By Council Members Cohen, Crowley, Constantinides, Cumbo, Eugene, Gentile, Koo, Mendez, Torres, Rodriguez and Rosenthal

Whereas, In 2010, there were 20 suicides in state correctional facilities alone, double the number in 2009 and the highest rate of suicides since 1982; and

Whereas, CBS News New York reports that suicide is the leading cause of death in jails nationally after illnesses; and

Whereas, Additionally, in 2013, New York City's rate of inmate suicide is 17 suicides per 100,000 inmates; and

Whereas, According to the *New York Daily News*, nearly 40% of the approximately 11,000 daily inmates at Rikers are diagnosed with a mental illness; and

Whereas, According to a 2013 article in *The New York Times*, mentally ill inmates stay in jail nearly twice as long as people without mental illness, an average of 112 days compared with 61 days; and

Whereas, It is critical to the well-being of inmates to ensure that those individuals who work in the correctional system are trained to recognize symptoms and indicators that may result in suicide, or other forms of self-harm or harm to others, and refer such inmates to appropriate treatment; and

Whereas, S.5740, introduced by New York State Senator David Carlucci and pending in the New York State Senate, seeks to amend the New York State Correction Law by increasing the training for staff in

residential mental health treatment unit programs inside correctional facilities; and

Whereas, Companion bill A.7659, introduced by New York State Assemblymember Aileen M. Gunther, passed the New York State Assembly on June 12, 2014 and was delivered to the Senate the same day; and

Whereas, S.5740 would help reduce the number of suicides in New York correctional facilities by providing additional training to corrections officers and staff; and

Whereas, New York should help ensure that inmates in correction facilities are provided the best possible mental health treatment while incarcerated; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State Senate to pass S.5740 and the Governor to sign such legislation into law, which would amend the New York State Correction Law by enhancing training for staff in residential mental health treatment unit programs inside correctional facilities.

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