



Resolution Number:	W-22-03	Sponsored By:	VP Aaron Rusch VP Faith Kidd
Introduced On:	3-3-2022		
Voted On:	3-17-2022		
Result:	Passed		
Vote Count:			

BILL TO: Consider creating a safety barrier or net on the “Little Mac” bridge

Recognizing, that “we, as members of Grand Valley State University’s Student Senate, dedicate ourselves to cultivating a student body that is engaged, healthy, and empowered”¹, and to further our dedication to our creed, Student Senate sees improved safety measures on the “Little Mac” bridge as an important consideration; and

Recognizing, that four Grand Valley community members, have lost their lives by suicide from the “Little Mac” bridge between the years 1977 and 2021²; and

Recognizing, a barrier or safety net on bridges reduces the percentage of completed suicide between 68.7% and 100%³ with the data varying based on the location and preventative measures; and

Recognizing, many studies find barriers or nets reduce suicide from the structure they were constructed upon by 80% or greater⁴; and

Recognizing, that based on the statistics above, a barrier or net on the bridge known as “Little Mac” would reduce or potentially eliminate suicide on the bridge; and,

Recognizing, a displacement or substitution effect caused by a bridge barrier or net is nonexistent or insignificant; displacement, in this instance, refers to the idea that building a bridge barrier or net would motivate individuals to commit suicide by jumping at different locations; and substitution, refers to individuals committing suicide via a different method other than jumping⁵; and

¹ <https://www.gvsu.edu/student senate/>

² https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1039&context=lanthorn_vol9
https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1001&context=lanthorn_vol30
https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1016&context=lanthorn_vol40
<https://lanthorn.com/86901/news/gv-responds-to-student-death-on-campus/>

³ <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0169625>, page 6; <https://doi.org/10.1136/ip.2006.013748>, page 57.

⁴

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Suicide-Bridges-National-Suicide-Prevention-Lifeline-Position-2017-FINAL.pdf>, page 5; <https://doi.org/10.1111/1753-6405.12157>, page 136.

⁵ <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2012.301089>, page 4.

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Suicide-Bridges-National-Suicide-Prevention-Lifeline-Position-2017-FINAL.pdf>, page 7.

Whereas, the argument behind displacement and/or substitution effects are not substantial enough reasons alone to dismiss installing safety measures on the “Little Mac” bridge; and

Recognizing, Grand Valley State University would likely incur significant costs from installation of safety barriers or nets on the “Little Mac” bridge⁶; and

Recognizing, such safety measures may detract from the natural beauty of the bridge; and

Whereas, that in order to better align with our mission, vision, and values, the Student Senate body believes that the possible aesthetic drawbacks and monetary costs should not be a deterrent to establishing further safety measures on “Little Mac” for the purpose of saving lives; and

Recognizing, Cornell University has installed netting under multiple bridges on their campuses to prevent suicide⁷; and that Cornell University was able to “preserve the aesthetic value of the bridges and vistas”⁸; and

Recognizing, a petition circulating on Change.org to install nets on “Little Mac” bridge which President Philomena Mantella has recognized, has garnered over 34,000 signatures⁹; and

Whereas, the Student Senate believes that the “Little Mac” Bridge can uphold elevated safety measures that better align with University values whilst remaining a critical route of travel and space of beauty;

Therefore, Let It Be Resolved, that the Grand Valley State University Student Senate, acting on behalf of the student body, recommend consideration for a barrier or net to be installed on the bridge known as “Little Mac” in order to create an on-campus environment for the student body that is “engaged, healthy, and empowered” through the protection and preservation of lives¹⁰; and

Furthermore, Let It Be Resolved, that the Grand Valley Student Senate requests that student representatives be included in future discussions and decisions by administration regarding a barrier on the “Little Mac” bridge that take place at Grand Valley State University.

⁶ <https://theithacan.org/news/city-approves-suicide-net-installation-under-bridges/>.

⁷ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/cornell-putting-nets-over-gorges-to-stop-suicides/>

⁸ <https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2011/05/cu-submits-applications-nets-under-bridges>

⁹

<https://www.change.org/p/grand-valley-state-university-prevent-student-suicide-install-netting-on-the-little-mac-bridge>.

¹⁰ <https://www.gvsu.edu/studentenate/>