

My name is Erin Halsey and I live in Norwalk, CT. I am here today on behalf of my 8 year old son, Gavin, and all people who have been affected by heart disease and or sudden cardiac arrest. I fully support bill #7292, and feel it is imperative to have at least one AED in every school in Connecticut. I have met with continuous opposition on the local level in Norwalk, which is one compelling reason I am here today. Schools have evolved into so much more than just centers for learning; they are used for meetings, sporting events, plays, concerts, grandparent's day, etc., so to not have an AED available in a school is just irresponsible and wrong. How many more people will have to die before something will be done about it? I personally prefer reading about a child/adult being saved by an AED, more than I do reading about someone who has died because there was not one available.

Many of our neighboring states, including New York, New Jersey, and Rhode Island, have already made it mandatory to have an AED in all public facilities, including schools. With heart disease still being the number one killer of men and women, it only makes sense to have our state compliant by making every effort to be prepared in the event someone might need help. Our children spend the majority of there day in school. Why is there such opposition to keeping the children and adults who are employed there, who visit there, who volunteer there, on a daily basis, safe and ready in the event someone should experience cardiac arrest? The incidence for children is significantly less, which I understand, but I refuse to have my son become a statistic because adequate help was not available.

Many organizations have been working tirelessly to try and raise awareness about heart disease and prevention, especially in children. There was legislation recently passed regarding vending machines in schools, there is information about the importance of eating right, as well as encouraging increased physical activity, which mean more kids will playing sports. With more kids participating, the need for AED's in the schools becomes even more apparent. My daughter is going out for lacrosse today, where her chances to experience sudden cardiac arrest now increases, purely do to the fact that she will be playing a semi-contact sport and I will do everything as a mother and as an advocate to be sure she is safe. It is now your job as a committee to be sure the schools are prepared to keep her, and every other child who plays a sport, safe, by being able to provide immediate, possibly life saving assistance if need be.

My purpose here today is to implore you, as a committee and as representatives of the government in CT, to pass this bill so that another life won't be lost due to apathy, economics or ignorance.

Thank you very much for your time and attention and will be happy to answer any questions.

Public Hearing Testimony Speaker:  
Erin Halsey

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