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Maple Hill Elementary School- Naugatuck, CT
House Bill 7292
Education Committee

I am a 38 year old mother of a third grader in Naugatuck, CT. I am writing to you to share my story and note the importance of having AED's available.

I have a history of heart disease in my family. My father had his first heart attack at the age of 38 and all my grandparents have died from heart related issues. I have grown up with Mitral Valve Prolapse since the age of 5, and had open-heart surgery two years ago to repair the valve. All was wonderful until last November 22nd. I just arrived home with my son when I suddenly didn't feel right. I had a slight pressure in my chest so slight in fact I began to lie down thinking it was a cramp. My son informed my husband that I wasn't feeling well and my husband came to check on me. He asked me what my symptoms were and at that point I had a slight pain in my back, within two minutes it was hard for me to swallow. At this point my husband informed me we were going to the hospital. I agreed and the three of us headed to Waterbury Hospital. We were 200 yards from the Emergency Room door when I passed out on my husband's shoulder. He is a former E.M.T. and knew I had just breathed my last breath. My son witnessed the whole event. Once the hospital staff got me into the ER it was confirmed that I was in full cardiac arrest. They took out their defibrillator and brought me back.

Shortly after, they performed an Angioplasty on me and cleared a deadly blockage and then put a stent in the artery. I am here today because of the fast acting team I had around me that night, not to mention a much higher power. I am here because when I went into cardiac arrest, I was lucky to be so close to a defibrillator. Assuming I was in my son's school, where I am frequently as a PTO officer and school volunteer, then I'm certain I would not be here today to share my story with you.

As personal as this is for me, my main concern is for the children. Heart attacks certainly are not common in children, but heart irregularities and other heart disorders can lead to Sudden Cardiac Arrest, even in children. Consider also, the psychological issues they'd experience if, they were to witness an adult in school having a heart attack and nothing was there to help save them. An AED can help prevent an untimely death. Students, staff and parent volunteers would all benefit by having an AED nearby. Which would you prefer, sending your child, grandchild, niece or nephew to a school with or without an AED? I know AED's can be costly, but certainly the cost is well worth it to save a life.

I apologize for not being there in person, since I am in Cardiac Rehabilitation. I thank you for your time and consideration on this topic, please do what's right. Pass House Bill 7292.

Thank you, Lisa Herchenroether