

TO Public Health Committee
FROM: Matthew Russell
Naugatuck, Connecticut
SUBJECT: Senate Bill 1339 – An Act Concerning Automatic External Defibrillators
DATE: March 5, 2007

My name is Matthew Russell, I'm 33 years old, from Naugatuck, Ct.

I stand in front of you to share my story and, to support, Senate Bill 1339 –An Act Concerning AED's in schools and public buildings.

I have a congenital heart defect called Tetralogy of Fallot. I have had a 5 heart procedures in my lifetime, starting at the young age of 6 months old. I'm here to support Bill-1339 because of my latest health problems. On, Sept. 24, 2004 while attending a concert at Toads Place in New Haven Ct., I suffered a sudden cardiac death episode without warning and, to the shock of my friends, I collapsed. The electrical system of my heart went wild causing, the Sudden Cardiac Death. With luck on my side, my friends, some who are nurses and, others who are EMT's were right there and quickly went to work on me. Everyone around me knows of my congenital heart disease history so, the first thought was to check my vitals. Nothing, no pulse and, I was not breathing. Feverously, they started to administer CPR to me, nothing, no vital signs within my body lifeless. As my friends attended to me, trying their very best to bring me back others quickly dialed 911.. Once again, like a guardian angel watching over my shoulder, my luck had changed for, some odd reason, parked in front of the establishment was an ambulance. Responding as fast as they could, the paramedics used the AED on me. It took them three tries to get my heart rhythm back to normal. Finally, after 6 to 7 minutes, I had a faint heartbeat once again. I wasn't out of the clear at all but, I started to show LIFE !!! I spent 11 days in the hospital, my parents were called and, were told, I had fallen and bumped my head that night. My friend had to perform on stage after watching what had just happened to me. And, once, my parents arrived to the hospital, they spent hours with the Chaplain before even being able to see me. They weren't allowed to touch anything or me; I was sedated for 3 days for my own safety.

I was thirty years old at the time of this accident. I deal with this everyday of my life, trying to come to grips that I might have not made it out alive that night. I was one of the lucky ones but, stop and think for a moment. What if I was your child !!!! What if you had shown up to the hospital and, had to see your child lying there? I can't stress how lucky I am and, how grateful I am for my friends knowing what to do for me that Sept. night. What if that ambulance wasn't parked in front of the establishment that evening? CPR didn't work; the only thing that stimulated my heart was the AED ... every minute counts and every lost minute is a 10% loss of a chance to live.

AED's need to be required in public schools and buildings. We hear of children, young adults and seniors having sudden cardiac death in public places and school. It's a matter of SECONDS, not minutes to respond ... Heart disease is the number one killer in America, let's take one more step in protecting our citizens. Let's pass Bill 1339 for the safety and, well being of every person in Connecticut. THANK YOU