



State of Connecticut HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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*Testimony by Representative Jason Perillo
Before the General Law Committee
On House Bill 5503
February 25, 2008*

Good afternoon Chairman Colapietro, Chairman Stone, Representative Greene, Senator Capiello, and members of the General Law Committee. For those of you who do not yet know me, my name is Jason Perillo, State Representative from the 113th District. The seat previously held by our friend Dick Belden. I am here before you today to speak on House Bill 5503, An Act Requiring Automatic External Defibrillators in Health Clubs.

This bill is designed to bolster the presence of defibrillators for public access throughout the state – a goal in which I believe very strongly. In my life outside of government, I am the chief of a volunteer ambulance service, and I have seen first hand the importance of early defibrillation in the treatment of cardiac arrest. Stated very simply, it saves lives. For every minute that goes by in the event of cardiac arrest, the odds of saving a life decline by 10%. Given this statistic, it is no surprise that ambulances in even the best EMS systems often cannot arrive at the scene of a cardiac arrest in time. Thus, public access defibrillation is tremendously valuable and it is essential that we work in concert with businesses and property owners to place defibrillators throughout our communities.

Today I wish to specifically address the second component of this bill, which expands Good Samaritan protection to entities and persons purchasing or making defibrillators available for public access. I am here to tell you from my own first-hand experience that this expansion of liability protection is essential if we are to increase public availability of defibrillators and, as a result, save lives.

My ambulance staff and I have worked diligently for many years to bring defibrillators to public and private buildings throughout our area. The single most common barrier to our efforts is the concern by companies and property-owners about civil liability should someone be injured while being treated with the defibrillator they have provided. Many companies have worked with us to install defibrillators with good intentions only to have their attorneys reject the plan due to liability concerns – despite the state's existing Good Samaritan laws which protect only the users of defibrillators. We need to protect those who make these defibrillators available for public use as well.

This bill's introduction of liability protection for such companies will break down this barrier to public access defibrillation, lead to greater penetration of defibrillators into the community and, as a result, save lives. For this reason I support this legislation and the committee's favorable action.

Sincerely,

Rep. Jason Perillo
State Representative
113th District