

Members of the Connecticut Senate Judiciary Committee:

My name is Rachel Moyer.

I am the mother of a fifteen-year son who died from sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) while playing Varsity basketball for his high school team. There was no automated external defibrillator (AED) available. Gregory was never given the opportunity for what could have been a second chance at life if there had been an AED available that night.

His father, one of his sisters and I watched Greg die and we could do nothing to save him. We had no idea, at that time, that we had a responsibility to know CPR or to make sure that some one that was responsible for teaching, coaching or chaperoning our child needed to know CPR and also have access to an AED.

There was no one there that night, including one doctor, three nurses, an athletic trainer and athletic director that would start CPR and to this day we don't know why.

They waited, like everyone else, the forty minutes for the first ambulance to arrive. Were they, as trained professionals, afraid of the consequences of being a Good Samaritan to our son? We don't think so, we think they knew an AED was needed and that they couldn't save Greg without one.

We know now that if CPR is not started in the first couple of minutes after someone goes into SCA and if an AED is not used within the first 3-5 minutes of collapsing, then the victim will probably die.

The access to an AED when someone goes into SCA in 2009 should be as common to the public as are fire extinguishers. Do you seriously wonder if a person, no matter what their credentials might be, would hesitate to put out a fire, especially if someone's life was at stake? The answer is "no!"

In New York City, in 1911, a little less than 100 years ago, 146 young people died from a fire that destroyed the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory building. People in NYC and throughout the country were appalled that such horrific working conditions existed which included exit doors that were locked. The investigation and the results of this tragedy reformed this country and have saved countless lives.

Today, fire evacuation plans are posted in all public buildings, fire extinguishers are publicly and readily available, exits are clearly marked, water sprinklers are in ceilings, there are audible and visual fire alarm systems and fire drills are held in schools.

It is your time in Connecticut to make a statement by passing SB 1089. Children and adults have died in your health clubs, in your schools and in your public facilities when an AED may have saved them. Their families will never know, just like our family, if someone had just reacted with such simple skills like CPR and the use of an available AED, our son would probably be alive.

We know that in the United States, more than 900 people die each day from sudden cardiac arrest. This is 751 more people than those that died that fateful day in a fire that changed safety standards throughout the country!

Yet we continue to watch people die from heart conditions when we could be saving lives with a device that fourth graders have been taught to use. I have personally taught 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders CPR/AED usage through the American Heart Association's Friends and Family program.

Can they really use these skills? I would bet my life on it.

Can an AED save every one? No, but the American Heart Association believes we could save 50,000 lives a year if AEDs were publicly accessible.

What is wrong with this country when the worry of a law suit is more significant to someone than the possibility of saving a life?

I also believe that buying an AED after someone dies in a public facility is like putting on your seatbelt after you have been in an accident, it just doesn't make sense.

I have trained thousands of people since my son died, in how to do CPR and use an AED, but like most people that I train, I had hoped that I would never have to use these skills in an actual emergency.

This changed four weeks ago when a woman sitting in a chair near me in a public facility, went into SCA. She looked as though she had fainted, but I immediately realized that she was not breathing, moving or showing any signs of circulation. Two of us lifted her onto the floor at the same time I asked someone to call 911 and get an AED. I then started CPR immediately and I was soon assisted by a security guard. The AED arrived in less than a minute because this public facility had an AED and we attached the electrodes and it assessed this woman to see if she was in SCA.

It took ten minutes for the EMS to arrive on the scene.

When she left the building, this seventy-year old woman was breathing and had a pulse, unfortunately, she died in route to the hospital .

Did I ever personally think at that time or even later, that I could be sued for using my CPR skills or attaching the electrodes from the AED to the woman's chest? Then watching the AED analyze, stating no shock advised and then continuing CPR until EMS arrived and contemplate if I could do any harm. The woman was dead, she only had a chance if someone opened her airway, helped her breathe and gave chest compressions that she had any chance at life!

I was not trying to be a hero, I was trying to be a Good Samaritan.

During the school year, approximately 20% of this country's population finds itself on a school campus at some point during the school day. You will find students, teachers, administrators, coaches and school staff. You will find parents, grandparents, neighbors and friends picking up or dropping off kids. You will find spectators at games, deliveries being made and after school activities being held.

I have had people tell me that they have been administrators in a school for thirty years and have never had an incident of sudden cardiac arrest. Then I ask how many fires they have witnessed. They will also admit that they have never had a fire either. So does, this mean that we get rid of the fire extinguishers or stop fire drills? The answer is an unequivocal "NO!"

I cannot bring my son back or the other loved ones that have died from sudden cardiac arrest.

However, I can encourage each of you to pass a bill that will provide AEDs in all schools and public places. Ironically, New York State passed the first AED law that mandated that all schools have an AED on site and at all school activities. Since this law took effect on December 1, 2002, there have been more than 60 survivors of SCA by school owned AEDs.

This has been an extremely difficult battle and I am just one of many that have committed themselves to educate people about SCA because they have lost a loved one to SCA.

Ryan Gomes of Waterbury lost his team mate and his friend, Stanley Meyers to SCA during a summer basketball league. Ryan committed to making a difference that if ever made it to the NBA, he would keep Stanley's spirit alive and educate people about SCA. He has played for the Boston Celtics and is now playing for the Minnesota Timberwolves. He has given away over forty AEDs and established Hoops for Heart Health. The citizens of CT should be so proud! Ryan has made a difference just as this committee can do.

How can members of the Senate or House justify AEDs in your state prisons here in Connecticut but not have them in your schools and in your public places?

Unfortunately, it usually takes a tragedy before people react. Please do the right thing and allow people to be Good Samaritans and make sure AEDs are available.

There is no greater loss than that of a child to SCA when it may have been prevented unless it is the loss of a second child to SCA.

Thank you.

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