

**General Law Committee Public Hearing
Thursday, February 25, 2010**

**Testimony of Chris Barrett
in Support of SB 186 An Act Concerning Automatic
External Defibrillators in Health Clubs**

Senator Colapietro, Representative Shapiro, Members of the General Law Committee, for the record my name is Christopher Barrett of Niantic.

When I think about AED's and why we should have these devices in health clubs, to me it is somewhat similar to seatbelts in cars. Frankly, I hate the government telling me, what I can, and can not do. Government mandates, seem to place a burden on the people. Health clubs may not wish to be forced into buying these devices, but the cost should not deter a club from buying one, as it is the right thing to do. Like most computer devices, the costs have come down significantly over the past years. Ralph Nader crusaded to have seat belts in automobiles in the 60's, as it was proven they saved lives. The folks in Detroit felt the pressure for many years, claiming they did not see the need. However, if you raced cars, you happily wore a seat belt. As race car drivers knew firsthand that seatbelts saved lives. Then came a long period of time, where there was no enforcement concerning the use of seat belts. Many lives may have been saved, had the advocates of seat belts pushed harder for enforcement.

It took many years to realize this simple safety device could, and would save lives. Hopefully, we will not wait too many more years to place AED's in health clubs. Like seat belts, AED's do save lives.

AED's are similar to seat belts. You hope you never have to use it, but it is good to see one hanging on the wall. The place I play tennis, Lyme Shores, has had one for almost four years now. It has not yet been needed. But, most times you drive; you put on a mandated seat belt, and hope you never need to test how well it works.

Most health clubs have an influx of "new members" after the New Year begins. Those said new members, are trying to lose a few extra pounds, and are typically in poor physical shape. Too much holiday celebrating brings them to the point of wanting to lose those unwanted extra pounds. They are candidates for heart trouble. Calling 911 for an ambulance will result in an EMT, or paramedic getting there in maybe ten minutes if you are near a fire station, which is much too long to save a life of a heart attack victim in most cases.

If they do suffer a heart attack, without an AED the chance of them living diminishes. An AED will not guarantee them life; however it will increase the odds that they will live. Just like the aforementioned seatbelts.

This bill will save lives.

Again thank you for this opportunity to testify and I would be happy to answer any questions members of the committee may have.