

Senator Terry Geratana

Co-Chair, Public Health Committee

Legislative Office Building, Room 3003

Hartford, CT 06106-1591

March 4, 2012

RE: Support for Bill #RHB 56

Dear Senator Geratana and members of The CT Public Health Committee:

We became parents July 16, 2011 to a beautiful baby boy whose name is Ayden Arthur Armando. Ayden was born with a Congenital Heart Defect (CHD). His diagnosis was Atrioventricular Canal Defect and he had clef valve that needed repairing. We were so blessed and very lucky. We say lucky and blessed because we found out about his heart condition while 18 wks pregnant. Only about half of babies born with a CHD are diagnosed while in utero. Doctors were able to prepare and plan for Ayden's arrival and health care plan, as were we. Ayden had his open heart surgery December 5, 2011 at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Today he is doing amazingly well and continues to progress.

Of course we didn't know anything about CHDs. In fact we had never even heard of them. We were shocked to learn that CHDs is the #1 birth defect that affects 40,000 babies each year! We just do not understand why there seems to be no awareness or education about CHDs until it affects your life. Our hearts go out to those parents who take their babies home not knowing that their baby has a heart issue. We can't imagine the possibility being home with our baby and see him/her turn blue due to lack of oxygen, or seeing that baby grow into a child playing sports and suddenly he/she collapses. This can easily be prevented. Doctors can have a test done at the hospital before going home called; Pulse Oximetry Test, which costs approximately \$1 to do. A missed diagnosis of newborns with CHD can result in numerous consequences for the baby; surgical compromise, neurological impairment, developmental delays, organ failure, and long-term feeding issues. So many parents are jobless or don't have health insurance and rely on the State of CT for medical assistance. A missed diagnosis resulting in the preceding adverse effects on a baby can weigh heavily on the State of CT's Healthcare costs.

Since having Ayden, we tell all of our friends and family members expecting a baby to ask the hospital to do a Pulse Ox test on their newborn before leaving the hospital. The majority of parents just don't have any knowledge about CHDs or to know to ask for this test. The

importance of early detection of CHDs in newborns is simply this... **SAVING A LIFE**. No parent should have to lose their child from a CHD that was never caught. The advances in modern medicine are amazing and doctors can work miracles on babies with a CHD.

As a leader of our great State of Connecticut and your experience in public health we ask you to support this important Bill. Bill # RHB 56, calls for requiring Pulse Oximetry testing for every newborn born in the State of Connecticut. As residents of Connecticut, we would be so proud being one of the leaders in the country to have such a law!

In addition, we also ask that you consider amending the wording in the Bill to cover 'Any & All Screening for Critical Congenital Heart Defects'. As technology advances, we can continue to screen effectively without having to re-introduce legislation to cover such advancements.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Yvonne Nunes  
Mike Armando  
(Ayden's Mom and Dad)