TESTIMONY OF

THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS
&
THE CONNECTICUT PARKS & RECREATION ASSOCIATION

Before the Legislature's
Public Safety & Security Committee
Thursday, February 7, 2013
11:00 AM, Room 1E, Legislative Office Building

Good morning. My name is Dr. Robert Lehr and I representing the Connecticut Association of Schools and the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference ("CAS/CIAC").

Good morning, my name is Josh Medieros. I am the co-chairman of the Aquatics Section of the Connecticut Recreation & Parks Association ("CRPA").

We are here today to offer joint testimony **in support of HB 5113 AAC Pool Safety At Public Schools.** Our organizations support using the following recommendations to establish a uniform state wide policy for improving safety in pools at public schools and all public pools.

CAS represents more than 1,000 public and parochial high, middle and elementary schools and CIAC is the governing body for interscholastic athletics.

CRPA represents more than 600 recreation professionals and municipal parks and recreation commissions throughout Connecticut.

CAS & CRPA stand ready to assist you in drafting legislation that adopts a statewide policy that will enable as many children and adults to safely learn to swim.

The two organizations are pleased to agree upon the following recommendations. They believe that these recommendations set forth "best practices" and will make public and school swimming pools safer for everyone. They represent recognized and realistic measures that keep the ultimate objective in mind which is: ***to safely teach as many individuals as possible to swim.***

Because each of the organizations has different responsibilities, they have set forth separate recommendations; however, as you can see they are consistent.

The Connecticut Recreation & Parks Association recommends the following for inclusion in any legislation on the proposed subject:

1) A public pool is a municipal owned swimming pool consisting of an artificial basin constructed of concrete, steel, fiberglass or other relatively impervious material and has a controlled water

supply which is used for open swims, swimming instruction, and or coaching.

2) All public pools shall have a minimum of one certified lifeguard on duty during instructional swim lessons and / or open swim.
3) All public pools shall have a minimum of either one lifeguard or one coach that is lifeguard certified during all swim team practices and or meets and such coach shall remain in view of the pool while in use.
4) Certification must be current and obtained from one of the following nationally recognized organizations: American Red Cross, Ellis & Associates, National Aquatic Safety Company, Starfish Aquatics Institute, or the YMCA, and shall include training in CPR, AED and first aid.

The Connecticut Association of Schools recommends the following language for inclusion in any legislation on the proposed subject:

1) Individuals who supervise pool activities at schools during regular school hours and or during school-sponsored events, shall obtain swim safety and instruction certifications.
2) To teach swimming, diving and water safety in all public schools, individuals should hold a:
   - Standard Connecticut instructional certificate;
   - Valid Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation for Professional Rescuer Certificate issued by the American Red Cross or the YMCA;
   - Valid Lifeguard Certificate issued by the American Red Cross or YMCA; and
   - Valid Water Safety Instructor Certificate issued by the American Red Cross or the YMCA.
3) During school swim instruction, or any other school-sponsored pool event, an additional staff member must be present on the pool deck who is a certified lifeguard and who is certified in first aid and CPR.
4) School pool operators must keep copies of staff certifications on file and develop a written pool safety plan which must specify practices for pool supervision, injury prevention, emergency response, first aid provision and soliciting help.
5) Pool safety plans shall be reviewed and updated prior to the commencement of each school year.

Please note that although most members of both organizations already meet or exceed these standards; clear recognition of best practices will make public and school pools safer for everyone.

This completes our testimony. We will be pleased to answer any questions that you may have.