



**you're** the  
**cure**

**Education Committee  
Public Hearing – March 7, 2016  
SB 378 AAC The Recommendations Of The High School  
Graduation Requirements Task Force  
Jim Williams, Government Relations Director  
American Heart Association**

I would like to thank the Co-Chairs Senator Slossberg and Representative Fleischman, Ranking Members Senator Boucher and Representative Lavielle, and the Committee for providing me with the opportunity to comment in opposition to SB 378, on behalf of the American Heart Association. The American Heart/Stroke Association (AHA) is the largest voluntary health organization in the world who is working to build healthier lives, free of cardiovascular disease and stroke.

SB 378 attempts to delete “one half credit in health and safety education” as described in section 10-16b of the CT General Statutes (lines 38-43 of this bill). This attempt completely undermines the important work that passed just last year in this very committee that requires public schools to include CPR training as part of their existing health and safety curriculum. This legislation passed and is currently captured in PA 15-94 the provisions for which are set to begin with the 2016-2017 school year. The PA requires that the CPR instruction be based on American Heart Association guidelines for emergency cardiovascular care, including hands-on training in CPR. The Act also allows local or regional boards of education to accept gifts, grants, and donations (including in-kind donations) to purchase equipment or materials needed to provide the instruction.

Over 326,000 people have cardiac arrest outside of a hospital every year, and only 11% survive, most likely because they don't receive timely CPR.<sup>1</sup> Given right away, CPR doubles or triples survival rates.<sup>1</sup> Teaching students CPR could save thousands of lives by filling our community with lifesavers – those trained to give sudden cardiac arrest victims the immediate help they need to survive until EMTs arrive. Sudden cardiac arrest can happen any place, at any time. If you suffer sudden cardiac arrest, your best chance at survival is receiving bystander CPR until EMTs arrive. But most do not. That's a reality that has to change. Teaching students CPR before they graduate would put thousands of qualified lifesavers on our streets every year. Many people are alive today because individuals trained in CPR – including youth and adults who received training in school – stepped in and gave CPR until EMTs arrived. We need to create a generation in which every brother, sister, son, daughter, friend, and complete stranger is trained in CPR and is prepared to save lives.

One likely reason that the High School Graduation Task Force would like to delete this requirement is the potential fiscal impact, which in the current budget times might be understandable. The Office of Fiscal