

January 17, 2024

Representative A Thomas, Chair
House Education Committee
HB 2494- **Proponent**

My name is Ashley Dwight, and I am reaching out to you with a plea for the safety and well-being of every child in our community.

On August 3rd, 2022, my husband Bryan and I experienced a life-altering event that shook our family to its core. **Our oldest son, 17-year-old Davis, collapsed and suffered Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) during a baseball lesson.** His 2-story baseball club did not have an AED. Thanks to the quick and skillful actions of two coaches who performed bystander CPR for an agonizing 13 minutes while waiting for first responders, Davis was eventually resuscitated after receiving three shocks and an adrenaline shot.

The gravity of the situation became even more apparent when we learned that SCA is the #1 killer of student athletes. Davis, a healthy teenager with no prior medical issues & no answers as to why he suffered SCA, became part of a statistic that left us with more questions than answers. It shocked us to discover that only 10% of out-of-hospital SCA victims survive, with merely 5% walking out of the hospital without any deficits.

This revelation prompted my friend Jillaine and me to take action. **We founded 13BEATS, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness about SCA and providing free bystander CPR training to our community.** In the first year alone, we trained over 1000 people, emphasizing the critical role bystander CPR plays in saving lives.

However, our mission extends beyond awareness. **We believe that Cardiac Emergency Response Plans (CERPs) should be mandatory in every school.** Our experience has underscored the importance of having a plan, practicing it, and being prepared for cardiac emergencies. We cannot ignore the fact that SCA is a silent threat to our children, and a proactive approach is essential.

We urge you to support the implementation of a CERP in every school. Our children deserve the chance to survive Sudden Cardiac Arrest, just as Davis did. No parent should endure the heartbreak of losing a child due to a lack of preparedness in the face of a medical emergency.

Our gratitude extends to the heroes who saved Davis's life, and we believe that by passing a CERP, we can ensure that every child has the opportunity to be saved in a similar situation. Together, let us prioritize the safety of our children and work towards a community where every school is equipped to handle cardiac emergencies effectively.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate your commitment to the well-being of our community's youth.

Ashley Dwight

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