

Good afternoon, Chair Neron and members of the Committee. For the record, my name is Heidi Stewart, I live in Oregon City and I'm here today in support of House Bill 2529.

I was 18 years old and a senior in high school when I suffered sudden cardiac arrest. I collapsed in the hallway of my high school on Feb. 12, 2013.

The majority of people who experience cardiac arrest don't make it; I almost didn't. When I collapsed, was clinically dead for ten minutes.. I'm here today walking with you, talking with you, because my teachers and coaches cared enough to learn CPR. They started CPR within 2 minutes of my collapse and administered three shocks from an automated external defibrillator. The AED used to save my life was donated by the Quinn Driscoll Foundation, named after a 13-year-old student-athlete who died a mere 5 years prior after suffering cardiac arrest during gym class.

Quinn's school had AED's onsite and they had staff trained in CPR and AED performance, but no one knew who was certified or where the AEDs were located.

My heart condition means in addition to traditional treatments such as medication and proper diet with exercise, I am restricted in how vigorous and frequent I exercise. If my heart is given the opportunity to act up, it will. Having been a long-time competitive swimmer and varsity captain, this abrupt change to my life was unwelcome and difficult to navigate.

Like many young athletes who endure these abrupt and life-threatening situations, I, unlike the majority of them, am alive to tell you why having a plan in place is vital to survival. I am here to tell you that prioritizing proactive treatment and plans have proven successful and we must not turn away from a reality that is consuming our youth. That's our future, your children.

I'm living proof that heart disease can strike anyone, at any age.

I have sat in front of many communities across our nation pleading with them to act on imperative, proactive bills, but please hear me when I tell you that plans cut through chaos, and there is nothing more chaotic than the potential loss of a child or a person in a place where they are supposed to be safe.

Cardiac Emergency Response Plans (C.E.R.P) provide us the chance, the opportunity, to save lives no matter when a situation will arise, or to who it will happen to.

I want every child, every person, to have the same chance to LIVE LIFE, which is why HB 2529 is so important. Your life is important.