

To: House Education Committee

From: Mary Taft

Re: Support for HB 2529

Good afternoon, Chair Neron and members of the Committee. For the record my name is Mary Taft, and I am the mother of a Sudden Cardiac Arrest survivor from Bend, Oregon, here today in support of HB 2529.

On June 4, 2022, my 13-year-old daughter Nina was playing in a soccer tournament, a common occurrence nearly every weekend as any soccer kid parent can relate to. But this game was different than any game before, or any since. Nina was a starter in that game but within 20 minutes her coach subbed her out. She took a seat on the bench but seconds later fell over and collapsed. When we heard "Player down! Player down! It's Nina!", my husband sprinted right through the middle of the game to get to her, and I was right behind him. When we reached Nina, she was lying on her back and her eyes were dilated. As we kneeled next to her, trying to make sense of everything, she began to turn grey, and she suddenly made a sound that I will never forget. It was her last breath. As I started screaming her name, my husband Tom launched into action. It had been over 30 years since he had done CPR as a high school lifeguard. But he did the best he could as I screamed her name repeatedly telling her not to leave us. A relay of parents from our soccer team ran to get the AED to us as fast as they could from the main building. They only knew there was an AED there because unbeknownst to us, our coach had scoped its location earlier in the day. To this day, I do not know who the man was that knelt beside us with the AED, but I do remember how badly his hands were shaking. As soon as he turned the machine on, it started to yell very clear precise commands at us. This man and two others worked quickly to get the pads out and stuck to Nina's chest. As soon as they were in place, the machine commanded

“administer shock”. Nina did not have a heartbeat. For a second, Tom and I removed our hands from her and the shock was administered. And then silence. Tom launched into action again and continued the compressions. After minutes that felt like hours had passed, paramedics surrounded us. They worked quietly and deliberately as they cut through her brand-new soccer uniform and intubated her right there on the field. Her pulse was back. They put her in the ambulance and rushed us to Seattle Children’s Hospital where she spent four days undergoing every test and scan you could think of until finally being diagnosed with a left anomalous coronary artery. A heart defect we never knew she had.....one that would have eventually taken her life. Five weeks later she underwent successful open-heart surgery.

Our family is forever changed. We are blessed. Nina is one of the lucky ones. Which is why I am here today to tell her story and continue to spread awareness about the importance of CPR training and AED machines in hopes of preventing further tragedies from happening, especially at schools and sports facilities where large numbers of kids are at play. I’m asking for your support of HB 2529 to help kids like Nina to have a chance.