

Dear Members of the General Assembly,

As a former school Athletic Director, I can attest that the safety of the student-athletes, coaches, officials, spectators, and school staff was always my highest priority. I am writing to express my strong support for legislation H7027 which strengthens cardiac emergency preparedness in schools through the required use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs), athletic emergency action plans (EAPs), and cardiac emergency response plans (CERPs).

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is a real and ever-present risk in school athletic programs. Nearly 40 percent of SCA incidents under the age of 18 are sports-related. Evidence shows that preparedness saves lives. In schools equipped with AEDs, when paired with a practiced and coordinated response plan, gives students a fighting chance until emergency medical services arrive.

From a former athletic director's perspective, having clear and practiced emergency protocols is essential. Athletic emergency action plans (EAPs) and cardiac emergency response plans (CERPs) provide staff with clear guidance for the procedures and responsibilities needed during high-stress situations. When sudden cardiac arrest occurs outside of a hospital, proper planning and training ensure that no time is wasted when every second matters.

This legislation supports schools in creating safer athletic environments by ensuring access to lifesaving equipment, establishing clear response procedures, and empowering coaches and staff to act decisively in an emergency. As someone who was responsible for overseeing athletic events and practices, I strongly believe this measure will save lives and provide peace of mind to families and school communities.

I respectfully urge you to support this legislation and take an important step toward protecting our student-athletes and everyone who participates in or attends school athletic events.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to student safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Kortick', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gregory Kortick
West Warwick
Director of Athletics 2012-2023