

Chair Cutrona, Vice Chair Gross, Ranking Member Somani, and other members of the Health Provider Services Committee – it is an honor to be here today to support House Bill 47 to require AEDs in schools. To be working together to save the lives of children.

My name is Lindsay Davis. I am a former Miss Ohio and current heart patient who helped introduce “Lindsay's Law” in Ohio which protects student-athletes against sudden cardiac arrest. The law educates coaches, parents and the students themselves on the signs and symptoms of an underlying heart condition and removes them from play if they are exhibiting any symptoms until they are cleared by a doctor. The law also requires both the athlete and their parents to sign a form acknowledging that they have been made aware of these risks. And I am here to tell you today that the best way to build on the success of Lindsay’s Law is to pass House Bill 47. Lindsay’s Law provides the knowledge and the training. House Bill 47 provides the life-saving tool to apply that knowledge and training when things go terribly wrong.

There’s something very frightening about seeing your worst nightmare almost become a reality with someone else, and somehow it’s even worse when you’re watching it along with 50 million other people on National TV. A few months ago - that was the experience for me and many other heart patients and families when Damar Hamlin fell to the ground while doing what he loved - entertaining people and playing a game. What would’ve been an unimaginable tragedy for the Hamlin family, and the NFL community at large, turned into a triumph of modern medicine and efficient action.

You see that for our children, NFL players are heroes. They have posters of their favorites on their bedroom walls. They collect their playing cards and wear their jerseys. And it’s no wonder that kids want to grow up like their heroes. Athletes can perform some unbelievable heroics, such as throwing a game winning touchdown or hurdling over contact at an incredibly high rate of speed. Yet the reality is that these same heroes have hearts that keep them alive like the rest of us and, for them, the NFL has made a brilliant and noble decision. To make sure all of its players, coaches and support staff were protected by way of a simple and effective little device called an AED - or a defibrillator.

Having an AED on hand saved Damar Hamlin’s life - publicly, loudly, and unequivocally. Athletes in this country are our most protected class - we love them, cherish them, live vicariously through them and allow them to bring us joy and light in our lifetimes. I applaud the NFL for taking this simple step that prevented the unthinkable from happening.

In this room though, you’re called on every day, to think about and be responsible for another important group. The children of Ohio - we love them, cherish them, live vicariously through them, and allow them to bring us so much joy and light in this lifetime.

Nelson Mandela once said “There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats it’s children”.

If the NFL requires AEDs at each game to protect professional athletes, Ohio must do the same to protect the lives of its children. One group should not be more important to protect than the other. We must do this to avoid more pain, sadness, and senseless tragedy.

The next Damar Hamlin in high school football who doesn't live to fulfill his dreams. My hockey playing brother Evan who was the real athlete in our family making Ohio proud as a Buckeye, a Blue Jacket and a Monster whose career on the ice could have been cut short, Or the promising young ballerina, who doesn't know why she's fainting, but risks sudden cardiac arrest with each Pirouette.

I know of these life-threatening risks because that promising young ballerina used to be me. I am lucky I was diagnosed early enough and now have the honor and privilege of addressing this room, trying to save lives - and showing that beauty queens care more than just about world peace. But I don't want Ohio's children to have to rely on luck.

Numbers don't lie. Around 1 in 100 babies are born with a heart defect in the United States each year.

The survival rate for sudden cardiac arrest is less than 5%. But if a victim receives defibrillation through an AED in the first minute, the survival rate goes up to 90%. Each minute after decreases their chances of survival by 10%. We need to make AEDS accessible within 3 minutes in the places they are needed the most.

The wonderful thing about this country and our government is we can use our voices to truly effect change. I saw that first-hand with Lindsay's Law. And we've all seen with our own eyes how this incredible technology can save lives in professional sports leagues.

I know this resolution, while needed, could be lost in the shuffle of competing and important priorities, and I implore you to have the courage of your convictions to see this through until every child in this state has the same chance to live that professional athletes do. The same chance I was given.

Let's let modern medicine triumph all through Ohio like it did that day in Cincinnati, let every school from Columbus to Cleveland, from Toledo to Bellefontaine - be potentially a site of miraculous recovery just like the 45 yard line at Paycor stadium. We owe it to the children of Ohio, to their parents, and to ourselves.

I am so grateful for Representative Brown and Representative Bird introducing this legislation to continue to build on Lindsay's Law, and I know that your work will be instrumental in saving lives. Every child deserves the chance to live when faced with sudden cardiac arrest. Like we did with Lindsay's Law, we as Ohioans can lead the way for the nation, forge this path, and save even more lives together.

Thank you again for the chance to support House Bill 47. I will now answer any questions the committee may have.