

Members of the House Finance Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to share with you why it is important to teach everyone CPR.

Back in 2012, I was running my 8th marathon. I was in great health and running with my friends. We separated early as my friends took off an extremely fast pace. I told them to go ahead and I let them know I would see them at the finish line. My words did not hold true as I never made it to the finish line.

At mile number 2 of the Akron Marathon, I went into cardiac arrest. I had no warning, no prior symptoms, I just dropped. Running near me were a couple of nurses who saw me collapse. The nurses began CPR immediately and they worked hard to make sure I had the best chance to survive. After more than 10 long minutes of CPR the paramedics arrived and I was shocked back to life.

Now how does this happen to a marathon runner who is in shape, well I can say there is no explanation for what happened that day. The doctors told me I had a strong heart going into the race and a strong heart after the race. I have no blocked arteries; my heart pumps as well as it did when I was in my 20's, and there is no family history of heart problems. My heart had an electrical problem on September 29, 2012 that put me into cardiac arrest. With nothing wrong with my heart the doctors recommended the Subcutaneous Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator or S-ICD which will shock my heart back into a normal rhythm should I ever go into ventricular fibrillation again.

While on the mend, I spent many hours reading about cardiac arrest. I learned cardiac arrest is not a heart attack. Cardiac arrest is an electrical issue and a heart attack is a plumbing issue. For cardiac arrest I learned around 80 percent of cardiac arrests happen at home, around 9 percent of the people in cardiac arrest survive. For CPR I learned that a person in cardiac arrest who receives immediate CPR has double or triple the chance of surviving and 70 percent of Americans do not know, or are uncomfortable with, CPR.

Knowing CPR until defibrillation gives a cardiac arrest victim the best chance to survive and most people do not know CPR it was clear to me the number of people who knew CPR needed to increase.

The first few years after my cardiac arrest I nominated the nurses who saved my life for many awards. One award they received was the American Red Cross Acts of Courage. At the awards ceremony there were awards presented to others who helped saved a life. The survival story I am about to tell was the final piece of inspiration I needed to go on a mission and make sure CPR was taught in Ohio schools.

In 2012, at a construction site in a Montrose, Ohio shopping plaza, a construction worker came in contact with a live electrical wire. A co-worker was able to remove him from the live wire and saw that he was not breathing. An employee at a bike shop in the plaza saw a crowd gathering in the parking lot. The bike shop employee said to his co-workers that he is going over to see what is going on. Upon arrival he learned what happened and asked the group around the man if anyone knew CPR. No one in the group knew CPR. The bike shop employee said I learned CPR in school and not sure I remember it all but I will give it try. He started performing CPR which saved the man's life.

Knowing the CPR facts and not all schools were teaching CPR, I wanted make help make a change that should eventually help increase the change of surviving cardiac arrest. I called my State Representative and learned Representative Grossman was working on such a bill. I reached out to Representative Grossman and spent the next few years with her, my heart friends and the American Heart Association lobbying and testifying for House Bill 113.

I was extremely proud on June 14, 2016 when Governor Kasich signed into law House Bill 113. I felt from that point on everyone graduating from school would have the basic skills to provide CPR in the event it was needed.

When I spoke with the American Heart Association a few weeks back, I was sad to learn that CPR training is not happening in all schools which is why I am here today. I am asking this subcommittee to please consider funding CPR training in the schools which can help a trained student save a life. A life of a teacher, a coach, a friend, a family member or someone like me running a marathon. It will help create an Ohio where it won't be necessary to be running next to nurses for a chance to survive.