

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee, I am Stephanie Kornet, President/Co-Founder of the 4Alec Foundation and I want to thank you for allowing me to submit my testimony as a proponent for House Bill (HB) 47.

My son Alec, passed away at age 17, on February 14, 2017, from an undetected heart condition, which caused him to go into sudden cardiac arrest at hockey practice. Alec was what we thought, a healthy, 3 season high school athlete. He played varsity soccer, hockey and baseball for his high school. He went yearly for his well check appointments and was always cleared to participate in all the sports he played. He never ever had any symptoms of a heart issue. February 14, 2017 started like any other ordinary day. Alec and his younger brother, Michael, went to school. I picked them up after school and all was well. Alec and his brother had hockey practice that evening as they were getting ready for the district playoffs, on February 18th. While at practice that evening, Alec told Michael, who was the goalie, that he felt light-headed. Michael told him to go sit on the bench and get some water. This was so unusual for Alec. He then crawled off the ice and sat on the bench. Another unusual thing for him to do. The coach went over to check on him and Alec said he was okay. The coach said Alec didn't complain of chest pain or seemed like he had trouble breathing. One of his teammates was also on the bench at that time. The coach turned around to check on practice and Alec collapsed. He went into sudden cardiac arrest. His teammate yelled that Alec passed out. One coach called 911. The other yelled for my husband, Scott, to come over and they started CPR. My husband and the coach were doing CPR while someone ran to get the AED. By the time they got the AED, which was behind the desk, in the lobby, the paramedics had already arrived. The fire department was literally 1.5 minutes away. I know this because I timed it during the day.

Shortly after Alec died, we decided we wanted to start a foundation to bring awareness, prevention and education to heart conditions/diseases that can lead to Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) in youth, teens, and young adults, to prevent other families from going through this pain. Over the past 7 years we have done preventative heart screenings, spoken at various schools at their sports meetings with parents and student athletes. We have also donated AEDs throughout the community. Scott and I have also shared our story with the local news channels and some of the professional sports teams in Cleveland to bring awareness to the silent killer of our youth.

Shortly after Alec died, I had met another broken hearted mom, from a neighboring community, Christa Poole, whose son, Devin Moore died at age 22, on December 6, 2017. He too suffered from SCA while playing basketball at the Rec Center at Kent State University. Because there was not a cardiac emergency action plan in place, no one at the Rec Center recognized that Devin was in cardiac arrest nor did they know where the AEDs were located, that includes the students that worked there. Imagine being a parent and watching that video footage of your child laying on the court for 13 minutes before any life saving actions were taken. Christa and I have become close friends and have dubbed ourselves as "2 Moms 1 Mission". We teamed up with their foundation and provided CPR and AED training to some athletes at the Ginn Academy. Then there was another mom from a neighboring community that called me about a year and a week after Alec died because her son had just died from SCA. Here was practicing for his high school's swim team, for their district playoffs. His name was Stevie Grieshammer and he was only 17. Alec, Devin, Stevie and so many other teens and young adults had no signs or symptoms of a heart condition.

SCA is the #1 killer of student athletes and #1 medical cause of death on student campuses. 1 in 300 youth are walking around with an undetected heart condition that could lead to SCA. Immediate bystander CPR and AED use increases the survival rate from 1 in 10 to 5 in 10. Also, a well practiced Cardiac Emergency Response Plan boosts the survival rate.

Many of us were watching the Bengals vs Bills game when Demar Hamlin collapsed from SCA. Imagine sitting with one of your children watching this in real time after having a child or sibling that died from SCA and how traumatizing it was. My phone immediately started blowing up with calls and texts. Luckily, Demar was in the right place at the right time, with trained medical personnel, athletic trainers and an AED readily available, however, most people who have a cardiac event are not that lucky. His situation brought AED use and SCA to the forefront, which raised many questions why aren't AEDs mandated to be in all schools and in community sports and recreation locations in Ohio? It has been proven that a well- practiced Cardiac Emergency Response Plan, CPR and AEDs save lives so why aren't the students and student athletes in the state of Ohio given the same opportunity for survival? If students are required to be taught the life-saving skill of CPR and AED use to graduate in Ohio, why are they not accessible to them in schools, playing fields, or rec centers? If schools, or community rec centers do not have AEDs because of a funding issue, there are plenty of resources to receive funds from to purchase them. Money should never be an excuse to not have a life-saving device.

It was recently brought to my attention by a lifeguard from our local, community pool that they did not have a working AED when the pool opened this Summer. So many thoughts went through my head. How could the same community that rallied around us when Alec died, including the Mayor, city council members, and school officials allow the pool to open with NO AED? How could they allow swim team practice and swim team meets with people from all over the greater Cleveland area to swim when there isn't an AED? Have they not learned anything from our tragedy, our efforts to spread awareness and prevention for heart conditions that could lead to SCA, encouraging everyone to learn the life-saving skill of CPR and AED use, and our efforts to make heart-safe communities? It did not sit well with us. I emailed the Mayor and told him I heard there was no AED at the pool and we would like to donate one to keep the community members and others that attend that pool safe. Naturally, he was beyond grateful and accepted our offer. The AED should be arriving this week.

Needless to say, HB 47 is very important to our mission and very personal or for lack of better words, close to our hearts. Knowing what I know now, I can't help but wonder if Alec, Devin, Stevie and so many others would be here today if Cardiac Emergency Response Plans were in place, well practiced and if AEDs were readily available. HB 47 is such a necessary and important bill. Our schools and communities should be "heart ready, heart safe". I would encourage you all to be a part of saving lives by voting yes on HB 47.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Stephanie Kornet