

BENJAMIN BROOKS
Legislative District 10
Baltimore County

Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee
Energy Subcommittee

Chair, Joint Electric Universal
Service Program Workgroup



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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT OF SB1024
Public Schools – Cardiac Emergency Action Plan - Requirements**

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
February 28, 2024

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on SB1024, Public Schools - Cardiac Emergency Action Plan - Requirements. The purpose of this bill is to enhance Emergency Action Plans (EAP) in schools by requiring each public middle and high school to develop a cardiac emergency response plan (CERP) to be inserted into their existing EAP.

As a result of the Elijah Gorham Act, passed by this body in 2022, Maryland schools currently have general plans around emergency responses, including having an automated external defibrillator (AED) in place. SB1024 merely updates EAP for school sporting events and adds additional language to strengthen cardiac responses. A cardiac emergency action plan is a written document that can be stand-alone or be inserted into an existing emergency action plan and establishes specific steps to reduce deaths from cardiac arrests in all school settings. School officials will work directly with local EMS to integrate the plan into the community's existing first responder protocol.

Each year more than 356,000 cardiac arrests occur outside of a hospital in the United States, 90% of which are fatal. That's because only 40% get the immediate help they need before emergency responders arrive. Many of us witnessed 24-year-old star safety of the Buffalo Bills, Damar Hamlin collapse on the field when his heart stopped beating after making a tackle. Thankfully the Bills had an EAP in place which allowed the members of the team's medical staff to restore Hamlin's heartbeat using CPR and an AED. This is a classic example of what an emergency action plan can do as far as saving lives. If the plan had not been in place and staff did not respond as quickly as they did, the outcome could have been much different.

Cardiac events can happen to anyone, regardless of age, health, or fitness. A carefully orchestrated response to cardiac emergencies will reduce deaths in school settings and ensure that chaos does not lead to an improper or no response. A cardiac emergency response plan (CERP) can increase survival rates from cardiac arrest by 50% or more by enabling a trained lay-responder team to act. Preparation is the essential key to saving lives.

In schools with emergency action plans, students, athletes, staff, and visitors experiencing cardiac arrest have more than doubled the survival rate compared to the rate in schools with no action plan. Emergency action plans prepare officials to provide immediate care and prevent tragedy. SB1024 ensures school officials are well versed in administering life-saving care in the event of a cardiac arrest and protects the lives of students, teachers, faculty, parents, and visitors.

For these reasons, I am requesting a favorable report on SB1024.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin T. Brooks".

Benjamin Brooks