



*Gina Palermo, President
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March 29, 2022

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee
131 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: **SUPPORT SB 0638** – Public Schools – Student Athletics – Requirements and Reports
(Elijah Gorham Act)

Honorable Chair Atterbeary:

My name is Wes Robinson. As Past President, I am writing you on behalf of the Maryland Athletic Trainers' Association, representing over 600 certified athletic trainers throughout the state of Maryland. We urge you to support SB 0638.

Athletic training encompasses the prevention, examination, treatment and rehabilitation of injuries and medical conditions. Athletic Trainers are experts in the field of sport safety and we are happy to lend our endorsement to this legislation as it hits upon a key component of our advocacy – athlete safety with a focus on prevention. The MATA is excited that the bill sponsors have been willing to work on and accept our recommendations to further strengthen the language around AED access and ensure venue specific EAPs. We are happy to submit our support of this bill as favorable as amended.

Having a well thought out plan is only the first step. If that plan is not exact, distributed, posted on site and rehearsed by everyone involved, it is destined to fail.

Even schools fortunate enough to have an Athletic Trainer are at risk. One Athletic Trainer at a high school cannot provide peak care in a crisis situation by themselves. While that Athletic Trainer is performing CPR, who is calling 911? Who is getting the AED? Who is unlocking the gate to allow the ambulance access to the field? All coaches need to be well versed in the Emergency Action Plan (EAP). As with any child, it takes the whole village.

I have heard from too many of my colleagues in the state, that they have an AED at their school, but they have no access to it. It is locked in the nurse's office. They are not allowed to take it out to the fields. It is not available after school hours.

Maryland Athletic Trainer's Association

This past year at Loyola Blakefield, a lacrosse player was struck in the chest and collapsed during a game. The Athletic Trainer had an AED on the sideline and the player was shocked in less than 2 minutes from impact. That young man is alive today because of the quick actions of the sports medicine team and because the AED was onsite and available. Had it been locked in the nurse's office, he would not have survived. Every school in Maryland and every athlete in Maryland should have that access to an AED. Every athlete should have the freedom to play the sport they love and be safe while doing so.

As ATs we often get to work the sideline and enjoy the excitement of sports. Unfortunately, we also bear witness to the tragedy of sport, the unnecessary and preventable death of a student-athlete that we have been charged to care for. It is an experience no Athletic Trainer can fully prepare for and one that no parent should have to endure. Our organization's goal and what has become my personal mission, is to ensure we legislate as much safety as possible. We must take every step available to avoid the human error and poor planning that can lead to loss of life and disability.

The MATA urges you to move this legislation forward as amended, supporting AED and Cold Water Immersion (CWI) access and mandating the implementation and rehearsal of venue specific emergency actions plans. Doing so will help to ensure the safety of all Maryland athletes.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wes Robinson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thank you for your time.

Wes Robinson, ATC PT
Past - President
Maryland Athletic Trainers' Association