

Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment

Written Testimony

William Marbray

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Hello Chair Feldman and Vice Chair Kagan. My name is William Marbray, and I am a Sophomore at St. Mary's College of Maryland in St. Mary's County, MD. I am grateful for the opportunity to tell you why I believe Senate Bill 593 is incredibly important to me and will help all high school athletes in our State.

On February 19, 2022, out of nowhere I collapsed to the turf during a soccer game and went into sudden cardiac arrest. At that point I had been playing soccer for around twelve years and had never experienced signs of having issues with my heart. Fortunately for me, within minutes I was given CPR and AED shocks and my life was saved by a parent volunteer. I was then transported by ambulance to Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, MD and within days I had open heart surgery to repair the cause of my cardiac arrest. Miraculously 7 short months after surgery, I had fully recovered and was back playing the sport that I love for the rest of high school and now I play at the collegiate level for my school's NCAA Division 3 Soccer Program.

In 2022 before my cardiac arrest I was a healthy high school and club soccer player. Whenever my parents took me for my annual check up or sports physical, we always responded "no" to questions about experiencing any heart related symptoms or signs because I genuinely had never felt any symptoms. As it turned out I had a congenital heart defect that had gone completely

undetected even though I had been a highly active athlete throughout my years of school. My experience is supported by national studies that say only 30% of athletes who have had a sudden cardiac arrest experienced any physical warning signs beforehand. This means that up to 70% of athletes who experience a sudden cardiac arrest are like me and had never felt symptoms and maybe even had a heart condition that was undetected before tragedy struck. Statistics like these make requiring cardiac prescreenings paramount because doing so will allow hidden heart defects to be detected before it's too late. It will also help keep high school students in our State healthier and give families peace of mind.

Even though I am very blessed to be alive and testifying in front of you today, I cannot act as though I am not extremely fortunate. Across our nation and in this State, far too many young athletes have lost their lives to sudden cardiac arrests. I am testifying today because I believe that passing Senate Bill 593, requiring high school students in Maryland to get cardiac prescreenings before participating in high school sports, will save and support the lives of Maryland students and families in this State.