

TO: Chair Roblan & Senate Committee on Education

FROM: Jim Balsiger
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DATE: March 12, 2015

RE: SB 79

Chair Roblan and Committee Members,

My name is Jim Balsiger and I am a heart attack survivor.

Last February 7th, I collapsed on my back patio in full cardiac arrest. Fortunately my wife and daughter got to me right away, pulled me in the house, and my daughter immediately started hands-only CPR. She did that for about five minutes until the medics arrived. They then shocked me and restored my rhythm.

I was then transported to the hospital. When I arrived I went into full cardiac arrest again. Thirty-one minutes later without a pulse or breath of air, the doctor asked my family: "Does anyone object to us calling off this resuscitation?" My daughter responded by saying: "Can the family object?"

The doctor then decided to shock me for the 22nd time and my heart responded with a beat. I was then put into a coma which was to be for 48 hours. The doctor told my family that I had a 10 percent chance of living, and if I did, there was a 90 percent chance that I would be brain dead or have severe damage to my organs.

I came out of the coma in ten hours, and two days later I woke up to the pain of five broken ribs. I never thought I'd be thankful for a group of people breaking five of my ribs but sure was on that day.

There are a lot of things on unanswered that day, but what I can tell you is this:

I am here speaking to you today with all my faculties because of CPR. The hands-only CPR that my daughter did until EMS arrived, and the CPR medical professionals did after that. Forty-five minutes of CPR is what allowed just enough blood to flow to my organs so that when my heart finally kicked in, they recovered.

Hands-only CPR is something that any person can do. It's a fact that the survival rate of heart attack victims is rising and it is because of greater awareness about Hands-Only CPR. Only seven and a half percent of heart attack victims survive outside of a medical facility. Wouldn't it be great to see that number go up to even 10 15 or 20 percent?

On behalf of myself and the sponsors of Senate Bill 79, I ask for your support in its passage.

Thank you.