

Written Testimony of Courtney Price-Dukes
Kansas State Senate
House of Education Committee
Hearing on HB 2494, school Cardiac Emergency Response Plans (CERPs)
Monday, March 18, 2024 1:30 P.M.

Chair Thomas and members of the House Education Committee,

First, let me start by saying thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Courtney Price-Dukes, and I currently reside in Wichita, Kansas. I have the privilege of serving Kansas as Miss Emerald City 2024, a local title under the Miss Kansas Organization, with plans to compete for the job of Miss Kansas in June. Today, I am testifying in support of HB 2494, requiring the board of education in each school district to establish Cardiac Emergency Response Plans.

While I could list statistics to support this bill, personal connections hold just as much weight. Outside of my role in pageantry, I serve as a Youth Champion with Rise Up for Youth, a Wichita-based non-profit organization that focuses on mentoring high school students in the USD259 district. We currently serve approximately 400 students between 7 high schools. Working with 400 students means dealing with 400 hearts, 400 lives that students' parents expect us to protect. How can we guarantee their safety without proper plans and protocols in place? Last year, Rise Up for Youth staff got CPR certified by the American Red Cross, but we only account for four out of the hundred faculty and staff members that serve these students 40+ hours a week. To know one of my students could lose their life in a scenario that you have the power to prevent is unacceptable.

Let me take you back to when I was in school. Specifically, let me take you back to June 10, 2015. On this day, one of my closest friends was undergoing open heart surgery. She was born with a heart defect that will forever affect her quality of life. Even though the heart surgery was successful, it did not eliminate all of her health issues. At any point, I could have lost her during track practice, playing badminton in PE, or simply walking to class. Those we are fighting for are not just "students"; they are someone's child, sibling, neighbor, and friend. We are fighting to protect our future leaders.

I can only imagine the peace and security my friend would have felt knowing that she had people trained and armed with knowledge of what to do if she needed an automated external defibrillator (AED) or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). With your help, we can make that peace and security a reality for our students in Kansas.

With that said,

Please consider supporting this bill.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Courtney Price-Dukes

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