

**Testimony for the Record
Submitted to the
House Education Committee
For the hearing of HB 1363**

January 26, 2025

Chairman Heinert and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HB1363 as presented to the legislature to implement a cardiac emergency response plan, which is vital for saving lives in cases of sudden cardiac events. As a mother, my life has been shaped by the reality of heart disease, and I deeply understand the critical importance of timely, effective interventions during cardiac emergencies.

My daughter was born with a severe congenital heart defect called hypoplastic left heart syndrome (HLHS), a condition in which the left side of the heart is underdeveloped and unable to pump blood efficiently to the rest of the body. From the moment she was born, my family's life revolved around her complex and ongoing medical needs, as well as the constant concern for her heart's ability to function properly. Over the years, we have witnessed firsthand how early intervention and quick response can make all the difference.

When a person experiences sudden cardiac arrest, their chances of survival decrease with each passing minute without intervention. CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and AEDs (automated external defibrillators) are not just first aid techniques; they are essential, life-saving tools that can stabilize a person's condition long enough to increase their chances of survival in the event of a cardiac arrest. The benefits of CPR and AED use cannot be overstated. CPR helps maintain blood flow to the brain and vital organs, and AEDs are capable of delivering a shock to restore a normal heart rhythm. The faster these interventions occur, the higher the likelihood of survival and recovery. I am personally grateful for the widespread efforts to train people in CPR and AED use, and for the legislation that is advocating for broader availability of these tools.

The establishment of a cardiac emergency response plan, coupled with a strong network of CPR-trained individuals and access to AEDs, is a life-saving initiative that could make all the difference in our communities. It is not just a matter of policy—it is a matter of life and death. For every family with a child like mine, for every person who faces the risk of a sudden cardiac event, this legislation represents hope. I urge lawmakers to act decisively and pass HB1363 so that we can save more lives, prevent unnecessary tragedies, and better support our communities.

Thank you for your consideration and commitment to this life-saving cause.

Sincerely,
Courtney Hoikkala
Bismarck, ND