



Senate Bill 1135 – California Youth Cardiac Screening Pilot

PRINCIPAL COAUTHOR: SENATOR BATES

SUMMARY

SB 1135 establishes the California Youth Cardiac Screening Pilot Program to provide, on a voluntary basis, free cardiac screening for pupils in grades 5 to 12 through the 2024-25 school year. Annual screening outcomes would report pupils screened and number referred relative to economic and ethnic diversity to evaluate the impact of preventative heart screening to find the reported 1 in 300 youth at risk from an undetected heart condition.

BACKGROUND

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is the [leading cause of death](#) of student athletes with an estimated [23,000](#) children under 18 lost each year in the US. making SCA a leading cause of death in youth. The survival rate for SCA is less than [10%](#), where it has stagnated for three decades.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has recently issued [new guidelines](#) that call for heart screening for all youth, thus recognizing the critical need to identify heart conditions before tragedy occurs and acknowledging that warning signs and risk factors have been [missed](#) by practitioners and parents alike. These guidelines recommend that at least every three years, and especially upon entry to middle, junior and high school, children should receive cardiac screening.

Robust cardiac risk assessment has become a national movement, evidenced most recently by the National Defense Appropriations Act funding for electrocardiogram (ECG) screening among young incoming military academy cadets.

Nationally, [nonprofits have provided more than 800,000 youth heart screenings](#). Hospitals are also recognizing the need for screening through programs like Children's Hospital of Orange County's Life-threatening Events Associated with Pediatric Patients in Sports (LEAPS) program, which encourages ECGs as part of pre-participation examinations (PPEs) for sports. In Florida, a dozen school districts have made ECG screening a mandatory component of PPEs.

PROBLEM

While new AAP guidelines call for practitioners to be aware of warning signs and risk factors and conduct a thorough physical and medical history, ECG testing is only invoked to explore known conditions. The reality is that at least 50% of youth stricken by SCA have no warning signs and no family heart history that would trigger follow-up diagnostic testing, so asymptomatic youth are not properly diagnosed. Multiple studies have shown that ECGs are [more](#) effective in [finding](#) youth at risk.

SOLUTION

Unlike the majority of tragedies that befall our youth, *SCA can be prevented*. SB 1135 recognizes that to accomplish this we need more robust cardiac risk assessment in preventative care.

SB 1135 establishes a pilot program to screen children for SCA conveniently in their school setting. These screenings will deliver a potentially life-saving service and give access to critical care before tragedy strikes. SB 1135 allows a nonprofit to administer the pilot on behalf of the Department of Education and/or receive free or reduced-cost services from medical providers and entities related to the program.

SPONSOR

Eric Paredes Save a Life Foundation - a nonprofit founded by the parents of Eric Paredes that works to prevent the unnecessary loss of children to undetected heart conditions, and honors their late son who died suddenly and unexpectedly from Sudden Cardiac Arrest as a high school sophomore athlete in 2009.

CONTACT

Danielle Parsons
(916) 651-4038
Danielle.Parsons@sen.ca.gov