

SENATE No. 1157

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Brian A. Joyce

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act to prevent sudden cardiac arrest.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Brian A. Joyce

Norfolk, Bristol and Plymouth

Jennifer L. Flanagan

Worcester and Middlesex

SENATE No. 1157

By Mr. Joyce, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 1157) of Brian A. Joyce and Jennifer L. Flanagan for legislation to prevent sudden cardiac arrest. Public Health.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. 1027 OF 2013-2014.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Eighty-Ninth General Court
(2015-2016)**

An Act to prevent sudden cardiac arrest.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. This act shall be known as the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act.

2 SECTION 2. Chapter 111 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2012 Official Edition,
3 is hereby amended by inserting after section 222 the following section:-

4 Section 222A. Standards for preventing sudden cardiac arrest and death in student
5 athletes.

6 (a) For the purposes of this section, the following words shall have the following
7 meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

8 “Athletic activity”, all of the following:

9 (1) Interscholastic athletics.

10 (2) An athletic contest or competition, other than interscholastic athletics, sponsored by
11 or associated with a school entity, including cheerleading, club-sponsored sports activities and
12 sports activities sponsored by the school or school-affiliated
13 organizations.

14 (3) Noncompetitive cheerleading that is sponsored by or associated with a school entity.

15 (4) Practices, interschool practices and scrimmages for all of the activities listed under
16 paragraphs (1), (2) and (3).

17 “School entity”, all public schools and any school subject to the Massachusetts
18 Interscholastic Athletic Association rules.

19 (b) Educational materials –

20 (1) The Department of Education shall develop and post on its publicly accessible

21 Internet websites guidelines and other relevant materials to inform and educate students
22 participating in or desiring to participate in an athletic activity, their parents and their coaches
23 about the nature and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest, including the risks associated with
24 continuing to play or practice after experiencing the following symptoms: fainting or seizures
25 during exercise, unexplained shortness of breath, chest pains, dizziness, racing heart rate and
26 extreme fatigue.

27 (2) In developing the guidelines and materials, the Department of Education may utilize,
28 at no cost to the State, an educational video created by Simon’s Fund for the purpose of
29 educating coaches about sudden cardiac arrest, or other existing materials developed by
30 organizations, such as Parent Heart Watch and Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndromes.

31 (3) A student participating in or desiring to participate in an athletic activity and the
32 student's parent or guardian shall, each school year and prior to participation by the student in an
33 athletic activity, sign and return to the student's school an acknowledgment of receipt and review
34 of the sudden cardiac arrest symptoms and warning sign information sheet developed under this
35 subsection.

36 (c) A school entity may hold an informational meeting prior to the start of each athletic
37 season for all ages of competitors regarding the symptoms and warning signs of sudden cardiac
38 arrest. In addition to students, parents, guardians, coaches and other school officials,
39 informational meetings may include physicians, pediatric cardiologists and athletic trainers.

40 (d) Removal from play –

41 (1) A student who passes out or faints while participating in, or immediately following,
42 an athletic activity, or who is known to have passed out or fainted while participating in or
43 immediately following an athletic activity, must be removed from participation at that time by
44 the athletic director, coach or athletic trainer.

45 (2) A student who, as determined by a game official, coach from the student's team,
46 certified athletic trainer, licensed physician or other official designated by the student's school,
47 exhibits signs or symptoms set forth in this section during an athletic activity, may be removed
48 from participation by said game official, coach from the student's team, certified athletic trainer,
49 licensed physician or other official designated by the student's school, if he reasonably believes
50 that said symptoms are cardiac related. In the absence of one of the persons listed in this
51 subsection, coaches who observe any of the other symptoms set forth in this section, should

52 notify the parent(s) of the student so that the parent(s) can determine what treatment, if any, the
53 student should seek.

54 (3) A student who is removed from play under this provision shall not be
55 permitted return to participation in an athletic activity until the student is evaluated and
56 cleared for return to participation in writing by an appropriate medical professional.

57 (e) Training course –

58 (1) Once each school year, a coach of an athletic activity shall complete a sudden cardiac
59 arrest training course offered by a provider approved by the department.

60 (2) A coach of an athletic activity shall not be eligible to coach the athletic activity until
61 the coach completes a training course as required under this subsection.

62 (f) Penalties – The governing school body shall establish the following minimum
63 penalties for a coach found in violation of the requirements under subsection (c), the penalties
64 shall take effect two years following the effective date of this section:

65 (1) For the first violation, a suspension from coaching any athletic activity for the
66 remainder of the season.

67 (2) For a second violation, suspension from coaching any athletic activity for the
68 remainder of the season and for the next season.

69 (3) For a third violation, permanent suspension from coaching any athletic activity.

70 (g) The sponsors of youth athletic activities are encouraged to follow the guidance stated
71 in this section.

72 (h) Nothing in this section shall be construed to create, establish, expand, reduce, contract
73 or eliminate any civil liability on the part of any school entity or school employee.