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Reps. Capps and Foley Introduce Legislation to Bring CPR Instruction to Schools

Washington, D.C. – On Valentine’s Day, Representatives Lois Capps (D-CA) and Mark Foley (R-FL) – co-chairs of the Congressional Heart and Stroke Coalition – announced the introduction of bipartisan legislation to help schools provide CPR instruction.

Capps and Foley made the announcement at a press conference today with Dianne Canova, the American Heart Association’s Vice President for Advocacy, and Scott Conner, the American Red Cross’ Vice President for Health and Community Services. Students from Hine Junior High School in Washington, D.C. also joined the press conference and passed out Valentines to lawmakers, asking them to cosponsor the bill.

“I’m pleased to introduce this bipartisan bill with Representative Foley and with the endorsement of the American Heart Association and the American Red Cross,” said Representative Lois Capps. “This bill grew out of my experience as a school nurse in Santa Barbara where I began CPR curriculum. I saw a real need to teach students these lifesaving skills then and the need still exists today.”

The Teaching Children to Save Lives Act would provide grants through the Department of Education to local school districts for CPR training in grades six through 12. The schools would work in conjunction with community organizations – such as the American Heart Association, the American Red Cross, fire and police departments, hospitals, and parent-teacher associations. The bill authorizes \$30 million over three years to purchase CPR materials such as mannequins, Automated External Defibrillator trainers, and to train teachers as instructors.

“Local schools across the country are in desperate need for funding to hire teachers and modernize buildings,” said Representative Capps. “Very few schools have the means to support CPR training, though it’s something schools have told me they would like to do. This is one way the federal government can step in to help our public schools.”

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S. with 220,000 Americans dying each year of sudden cardiac arrest. According to American Heart Association estimates, 50,000 cardiac victims’ lives could be saved each year by initiating the “Chain of Survival.” This includes an immediate call to 911, early CPR and defibrillation, and early advanced life support.

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