EPILEPSY
FOUNDATION
END EPILEPSY TOGETHER

**Epilepsy Foundation – National Office**
**RE: H 5491**
**IN SUPPORT**

March10, 2025

Representative Joseph M. McNamara, Chair
House Committee on Education
Rhode Island State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Chairman McNamara and committee members:

The Epilepsy Foundation and our affiliate chapter, Epilepsy Foundation New England, are pleased to endorse H 5491. This bill supports a critical priority for the Epilepsy Foundation and the epilepsy community writ large – safety and continuity of care in the event of a seizure at school. Through this important piece of legislation, the care and safety of students with epilepsy and seizures in schools would greatly improve by requiring school personnel to meet training requirements necessary to administer or assist with the self-administration of FDA-approved seizure rescue medications, through requiring all school personnel to undergo an approved seizure recognition and first-aid training, and ensuring that a seizure action plan is on file for each student with a seizure disorder. This will ensure they are not only prepared for but can recognize and respond appropriately and efficiently to a student experiencing a seizure.

Epilepsy is a medical condition characterized by seizures, which are sudden surges of electrical activity in the brain, that affects a variety of mental and physical functions. Approximately 1 in 26 Americans will develop epilepsy, and approximately 1 in 10 people will experience a seizure, at some point in their lifetime. A seizure can happen to any person, in any place, at any time, and it is vital that school personnel are prepared to respond in this event appropriately and effectively. Compared to students with other health concerns, one Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study showed that students aged 6-17 years living with epilepsy were more likely to miss 11 or more days of school in the past year. For these students, proper seizure first aid and continuity of care while they are at school is crucial to ensuring they can reach their full potential with as minimal disruption to their learning environment as possible.

The Epilepsy Foundation is the leading national voluntary health organization that speaks on behalf of the at least 3.4 million Americans with epilepsy and seizures. Our affiliate chapter, Epilepsy Foundation New England, provides services and advocates on behalf of the 11,100 Rhode Islanders, including 1,300 children, living with epilepsy and seizures in the state. Together, we foster the wellbeing of children and adults affected by seizures through research programs, educational activities, advocacy, and direct services.

The Epilepsy Foundation and Epilepsy Foundation New England urge you to support this important legislation to help ensure children living with epilepsy and seizures are safe and experience continuity of care while at school. Together, we can make sure Rhode Island is at the forefront of this important nationwide initiative by joining the 26 other states that have passed these critical protections.

Please feel free to contact Dominique Brown, Director of State Relations and Public Policy, Epilepsy Foundation at dbrown@efa.org with any questions or follow-up.

Sincerely,

B.Martin

Bernice Martin Lee
Chief Executive Officer
Epilepsy Foundation

Susan Linn
President & CEO
Epilepsy Foundation New England

CC:
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