



RHODE ISLAND
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AND
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ^{AFT}
AFL-CIO

To: House Education Committee
From: James Parisi, Field Representative
Date: March 18, 2025
Re: **School Indoor Air Quality**
Testimony in **Support** of H 5597 (Representative Cotter, et. al.)

The Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals supports H 5597 and appreciates Rep. Cotter's advocacy for a healthy and safe school environment. H 5597 would create measurable indoor air quality standards in public schools and would create a testing and monitoring system to ensure implementation of the standards.

Classroom conditions are important for student success. The RIFTHP has long advocated for improved learning environments for students and appreciate Assembly support for the increase investments in school construction and renovation. Maintaining HVAC systems in new schools and renovated schools is important as well. Having measurable standards for air quality will ensure the benefits of school construction and renovation are realized.

Of course, many districts have not embarked on school renovation projects or those that have are only working on a small portion of their schools. Most RI students remain in old school buildings (average age of 50) with antiquated or nonexistent ventilation systems. H 5597 would ensure that students attending those schools and staff working in those buildings have a healthy environment.

Complaints about bad air quality are common when teachers and school staff talk about their school buildings. Having measurable standards is essential to identifying problems and getting resolution to unhealthy conditions.

The RIFTHP urges support for H 5597.

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