



Asthma and Allergy  
Foundation of America

April 28, 2026

Representative Marvin L. Abney, Chair  
House Finance Committee  
State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: Letter of Support for H.7582**

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

On behalf of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) I am writing in support of H.7582, a bill that establishes healthy indoor air quality (IAQ) guidelines for Rhode Island Schools. I encourage you to move H. 7582 to the House floor for a vote. H.7582 is a streamlined version of a similar bill introduced last year. A companion bill has passed the full Senate and has been sent to the House Education Committee for consideration.

H.7582 requires the Department of Health to establish guidelines for indoor air quality in schools, including recommended thresholds and rates for environmental conditions that directly affect student and teacher health. In addition, H.7582 requires that inspections and evaluations of indoor air quality is added to the assessments that already occur in Rhode Island schools once every five years. Importantly, these evaluations are already **subject to the existing availability of state funding appropriated for statewide school facilities assessments**, ensuring that H.7582 does not add costs to schools and school districts.

On May 15, 2025, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed House Resolution H.6342 proclaiming May to be Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month in the State of Rhode Island. Rhode Island faces a serious childhood asthma crisis, ranking 25% higher than the national average for rates of childhood asthma.<sup>3</sup> In AAFA's 2025 Asthma Capitals research report, **Providence ranked in the top 10 most challenging cities to live with asthma.**<sup>4</sup> This calculation is based on three health outcomes: prevalence, asthma-related ED visits, and asthma-related mortality rates. Nationwide, 9 to 11 people lose their lives to asthma every day. H.7582 takes action to minimize the risk factors that exacerbate this chronic condition can help prevent severe outcomes for students and their teachers and addresses what the General Assembly recognized in declaring May Asthma and Allergy Awareness month in Rhode Island.



Good indoor air quality in our schools can prevent severe outcomes for children suffering with asthma, improve school attendance, boost academic achievement, and support teacher health. In Rhode Island, implementing these air quality measures would simply build upon existing survey processes and identify issues related to ventilation, filtration, carbon dioxide levels, and airborne pollutants. Following in the footsteps of other states, H.7582 creates a mechanism to assess air quality before it increases facility costs or creates or exacerbates health issues for teachers and students.

When we spend nearly 90% of our time indoors, good air quality is a necessity for health. Students and teachers spend approximately 7 hours of their day in school, and it is essential that this time is spent in a healthy environment, especially for the two students per classroom in Rhode Island that have asthma.<sup>5,6</sup> For the thousands of Rhode Island children who manage asthma every day – and for the teachers and staff who work in these buildings, this bill matters. By creating these voluntary guidelines for indoor air quality, the Department of Health gives an additional tool to schools, school boards, students, parents, and teachers to evaluate the safety of their schools.

H.7582 is a comprehensive, science-based approach to protecting Rhode Island's schoolchildren from the health harms of poor indoor air quality. It establishes clear standards, creates accountability through systematic assessment and public reporting, requires meaningful filtration improvements, and takes effect immediately. As the leading patient organization advocating for people with asthma and allergies, and the oldest asthma and allergy group in the world, we respectfully encourage the committee to move this bill to the House floor for a full vote.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Mendez  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America