



RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF NURSING

April 28, 2026

Subject: **Support H7582**

My name is Linda Mendonça and I am a Rhode Island Registered nurse and constituent. Additionally, as a Board Member of the American Lung Association in Rhode Island I would like to thank Representative Cotter for introducing this legislation and on behalf of the American Lung Association I share their strong support for passage.

The science is clear: cleaner indoor air supports student health, learning, and well-being. Decades of research show that poor indoor air quality in schools contributes to increased absenteeism, worsened asthma and respiratory conditions, and decreased educational performance and test scores. Proper ventilation can reduce the transmission of airborne illnesses by up to 80% and increase the number of students passing standardized math and reading tests by 3%. Asthma is responsible for roughly one in six student absences.

I can personally attest having practiced school nursing for twenty-five years and witnessed the poor indoor air quality in our schools. This particularly impacted students and staff with chronic health conditions such as asthma. The deferred maintenance and old HVAC systems have contributed to this problem. The COVID-19 pandemic was a wake-up call and a silver lining increasing the awareness of indoor air and ventilation in schools. It's time to address this issue impacting the health and well-being of the occupants!

The companion bill – S2873 sponsored by Senator DiPalma passed unanimously on the Senate floor last month. I strongly encourage you to pass this legislation to ensure Rhode Island's schools have clean indoor air by establishing state guidelines for indoor air quality, setting higher filtration standards, and inspecting indoor air quality in schools.

Sincerely,

Linda Mendonça, DNP, RN, PHNA-BC, NCSN, FNASN
Associate Professor
Community/Public Health Nursing
lmendonca@ric.edu C - 401-374-2179