

Testimony of Hans Scholl

**In Support of H.B. 7125 - CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR EDUCATION --  
STATEWIDE REFERENDUM**

House Committee on Finance

Thursday, February 17, 2022

To the Members of the House Committee on Finance,

H. B. 7125 will allow correction of building deficiencies that continue to damage our children, our teachers, our workers, and our planet. Although much positive work has been since the \$250 million plan passed in 2018, much work lies still ahead of us. We cannot stop half-way if we really want to more comprehensively improve our schools' environment.

If approved, H-7125 will provide the money to do this, by providing incentive funding for early childhood education, health and safety improvements, more resilience during the current, and future pandemics, and, equally important, incentives for energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements that will contribute to Rhode Island meeting the mandates of the Act on Climate.

The air our children and teachers breathe has a substantial impact on their health and educational performance. Air pollution, if not removed, damages our children's health and handicaps their ability to perform. Damages can include premature death, asthma, cardiovascular disease, lung cancer, and developmental problems, during childhood, and beyond.

These negative impacts are avoidable, using readily available technical solutions like energy efficient HVAC systems with HEPA filter, and remediation of mold in walls and ceilings. There is no need to hold off on investment into these measures, there is no need to continue to tolerate potentially damaging conditions. H. B. 7125 will provide the funds for improvement, and makes a clear policy statement that the health of our children and teachers matters.

Effective HEPA air filtration would have helped during the current COVID pandemic, and will also help during any future pandemic with airborne transmission and infection risks.

In addition, implementation of the funds under H. B. 1725, if done right, will reduce a significant amount of carbon emissions. This will make an ongoing contribution to mitigating the climate crisis, and is in line with the requirements of the Act on Climate.

In view of these clear benefits, I urge you to vote in favor of the bill. We want our children and grandchildren, and their teachers to thrive and be healthy. We owe it to them.

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