

March 27, 2026

Representative Carol Hagan McEntee
Chairwoman
House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island General Assembly

c/o Clerk Roberta DiMezza
HouseJudiciary@rilegislature.gov

Support for H7743

Dear Representative McEntee and members of the committee,

I am Sarah Pontarelli, writing to express my strong and heartfelt support for H7743, which has the potential to profoundly impact the lives of countless individuals and families in Rhode Island who are affected by anaphylaxis.

As a paramedic with over 15 years of experience in Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts, I have witnessed firsthand the life-saving impact of early epinephrine administration in cases of anaphylaxis. Severe allergic reactions can escalate within minutes, and delays in treatment significantly increase the risk of fatal outcomes. When epinephrine is given promptly, individuals frequently recover and avoid the most severe complications. When it is delayed, the consequences can be devastating.

My support for this legislation is also deeply personal. As the mother of two young boys with severe food allergies who have both experienced anaphylaxis, I live with the constant awareness that a single exposure could become a life-threatening emergency. In such moments, every second is critical, and EMS arrival times can be unpredictable. Knowing that police officers are another resource equipped with epinephrine offers an invaluable layer of protection and peace of mind for families like mine, especially if we are without immediate access to this life-saving medication.

In emergencies, police officers are often the first to arrive on the scene, sometimes preceding emergency medical services. Equipping them with epinephrine extends the chain of survival and ensures that critical intervention can begin immediately. This is especially important for individuals who may not even know they have a life-threatening allergy, such as someone who is stung by a bee and experiences anaphylaxis for the very first time. In these cases, there is no time to prepare; immediate intervention with epinephrine offers their best chance at survival. While no intervention is without risk, the benefit of timely access to epinephrine far outweighs the potential risks of not having it available. This practical, evidence-based measure will save lives.

This legislation empowers those already serving on the front lines to make a critical difference when every second counts.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Pontarelli

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