



**RHODE ISLAND LEAGUE
OF CITIES AND TOWNS**

*Distinctive Communities
Powerful Alliance*

March 6, 2025

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley, Chair
House State Government and Elections Committee
Rhode Island House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: BILL NUMBER H-5618 – RELATED TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- THE MANDATORY CARRYING OF EPINEPHRINE AUTOINJECTORS BY POLICE OFFICERS ACT

Chair Donovan and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, I am writing to express concerns regarding House Bill 5618, which mandates that all peace officers carry epinephrine auto-injectors on their person or in their vehicles and requires municipal budgets to allocate sufficient funds for the purchase and training associated with these devices. While we recognize the importance of ensuring timely medical intervention for anaphylaxis victims and do not oppose the administration of epinephrine by police officers in principle, we believe that this legislation, as currently drafted, presents significant financial and logistical challenges for municipalities across Rhode Island.

We respectfully urge consideration of the following concerns:

Flexibility for Municipalities – We recommend that the language of the bill be amended from a mandatory (“shall”) requirement to a discretionary (“may”) provision. Some areas, particularly those with longer emergency medical service (EMS) response times, may benefit more from this requirement than others where EMS services are more readily available. A uniform statewide mandate does not account for these differing needs..

Storage and Equipment Challenges – The bill stipulates that officers must carry the auto-injectors either in their vehicles or on their person. However, epinephrine auto-injectors must be stored in a temperature-controlled environment to remain effective. Given the extreme heat in summer and freezing temperatures in winter, storing these devices in cruisers is not viable. As a result, departments would need to purchase an auto-injector for each individual officer, significantly increasing costs.

Financial Burden on Municipal Budgets – The financial impact of this requirement is considerable:

- A two-pack of epinephrine auto-injectors costs approximately \$385 to \$500, with an estimated average cost of \$425 per pack.
- Newport, for example, would need to purchase approximately 90 auto-injectors, costing an estimated \$19,000.
- Epinephrine auto-injectors have a shelf life of only 18 months, requiring repurchases on a regular basis, creating an ongoing expense for municipalities.
- Training costs must also be factored in, adding further financial strain to already stretched municipal budgets.

Unfunded Mandate and Compliance Penalties – As drafted, the legislation imposes an unfunded mandate on municipalities without identifying a revenue source to offset the financial burden. Additionally, the imposition of fines on officers and police departments for non-compliance adds an unnecessary penalty structure for municipalities that may struggle with funding implementation.

We appreciate the intent of this legislation in addressing a critical public health concern. However, we respectfully request that the bill's language be amended to allow for local discretion based on community needs and resources. Furthermore, we stand ready to work with the bill's sponsor and stakeholders to explore funding solutions that do not create unintended financial hardships for our cities and towns.

Thank you for your time and leadership on this important matter. We are committed to working together to find a balanced and sustainable solution that supports the needs of the Police Chiefs Association while ensuring municipalities can continue delivering essential services.

We appreciate your consideration of our perspective.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "R. Rossi", written in a cursive style.

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House State Government and Elections Committee