



Asthma and Allergy  
Foundation of America®

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER

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March 10, 2026

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The Honorable Melissa A. Murray  
Chair, Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
State of Rhode Island General Assembly  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: S 2873: An Act Relating to Education – Health and Safety, School Air Quality**

Dear Senator Murray:

My name is Jan Hanson and I am President of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, New England Chapter, (AAFA New England). AAFA New England serves all six New England states and is based in Braintree, MA. I am writing today on behalf of AAFA New England to offer its strong support of **S 2873** currently under review by the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services.

Indoor air quality and ventilation issues are the cause of numerous health concerns in public schools, including asthma and other respiratory illnesses. Asthma is a chronic disease that causes a person's airways to become inflamed, making it very difficult to breathe and is the number one chronic illness for children.

Schools are often older in their construction and have structural issues that create environmental hazards such as mold, mildew, pests, poor ventilation, old heating and cooling systems, for example. Research has proven that these are environmental triggers for asthma and may cause the exacerbation and even the development of asthma for sensitive individuals. Asthma episodes affect school performance, are the leading cause for missed school days for students struggling with asthma and other respiratory illnesses, and often lead to emergency department visits and hospitalizations. Our children with asthma are vulnerable when schools have poor indoor air quality.

Reducing or eliminating exposure to these environmental irritants that directly affect health and learning is needed to achieve both improved indoor air quality in public schools in Rhode Island and better asthma outcomes for our students with asthma.

The good news: Evidence-based data, including from the CDC, informs us that reducing environmental triggers that significantly contribute to poor air quality will create safer and healthier environments and better health outcomes for individuals living with asthma, and may prevent asthma from ever developing.

S 2873 presents a clear and evidence-based strategy to improve indoor air quality in public schools in Rhode Island so that our school-aged children with asthma will have access to much needed healthy learning environments. RI DPH-established guidelines for indoor air quality in schools and recommendations for environmental thresholds and

rates for environmental triggers “that directly affect health and learning”, in conjunction with inspections and evaluations of indoor air quality at school conducted by the Department of Education School Building Authority, is a reasonable and actionable framework to remediate poor indoor air quality at school.

AAFA New England strongly supports S 2873 which, if passed, will allow for appropriate and coordinated measures to be taken to improve indoor air quality in public schools in Rhode Island, and significantly reduce the rate of asthma symptoms and flares for all who work or learn in these environments.

It is our sincere hope, that the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services will support S 2873 and report this bill favorably out of Committee. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jan".

Jan Hanson, M.A.  
President, AAFA New England

*AAFA New England is a 501(c)(3) organization.  
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