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**TESTIMONY OF
ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
BEFORE THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
MARCH 10, 2008**

I appreciate the opportunity to support of House Bill 5856, An Act Concerning the Emergency Administration of Epinephrine on School Buses and Student Transportation Vehicles.

This law will save lives.

This proposal allows a school bus driver or transportation operator to administer a cartridge injector that contains epinephrine -- known as an "epipen" -- at the request of a parent or guardian of a child, pursuant to a written order of a physician, physician's assistant or advanced practice nurse. The proposal also grants immunity from lawsuits for such person who is operating under the general supervision of the school nurse.

Current law grants the same authorization to administer an epipen and immunity to teachers, coaches and therapists acting under the general supervision of the school nurse. This legislation will allow a school bus driver of a student with certain allergies to be prepared to administer an epipen in the case of an emergency. This proposal will allow parents to ensure that their child is protected throughout the school day - from the time the child is boards a school bus in the morning until the student is dropped off in the afternoon.

Astonishingly, almost 2% of the general population is at risk of a fatal reaction to a food allergy or stinging insect. This number -- a stark statistical profile of potential injury or death -- comes from the American Academy of Asthma, Allergy and Immunology. For these adults and children, the wrong food or a bee sting causes breathing difficulties and a precipitous drop in blood pressure. Approximately 150 deaths -- virtually all preventable with the prompt application of an epipen -- annually occur in the United States.

Epipens are easy to maintain and simple to apply. Training is relatively short and inexpensive, often taking less than an hour. Yet, the potential benefit in saving lives and reducing hospital costs is huge.

I urge the committee's favorable consideration of House Bill 5856.