

**Testimony in Support of HB 5856:
An Act Concerning the Emergency Administration of
Epinephrine on School Buses and Student Transportation Vehicles**

March 10, 2008

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to you in support of HB 5856: An Act Concerning the Emergency Administration of Epinephrine on School Buses and Student Transportation Vehicles. I appeal to you as a mother of two children with life threatening food allergies who ride school buses and as a physician.

I would like to emphasize that there is no absolute contraindication to EpiPen administration for a life threatening allergic reaction and there has never been a report of a child dying from a correctly administered EpiPen. An EpiPen is an auto injector with a pre-measured dose of epinephrine (adrenaline), so there is no danger of over or under medicating, no need to fill syringes and no need to inject a vein. EpiPens are geared for people without any medical experience . Training to use them is simple and quick.

It is critical to understand that an allergic reaction may be precipitous and it is well documented that more fatalities occur away from home and are associated with either not using an EpiPen or a delay in its use.

Having said that, I'd like to consider the current situation and how this bill would change it.

It is a given that children with food allergies do take school buses. As it stands now, should a life threatening allergic reaction occur, a driver needs to recognize it, determine that it is serious and then call 911. So, currently, clear thinking and good judgment are already expected of the driver. Despite the rapid response of our EMT's and medics, an allergic reaction can be fatal in the time it takes for an ambulance to get to the scene. With this bill, the only additional requirement for the bus driver would be to provide an essentially fail-safe, risk-free injection which could save the child's life while waiting for help. With or without the EpiPen, we *already* depend on the good judgment of the bus driver to know when the situation is dire and help is needed.

I strongly believe that this bill would not be putting an unrealistic demand on our bus drivers beyond what they already do, despite any lack of medical experience and varying degrees of prior education. Therefore, as we *already* entrust our children to our bus drivers and their judgment, it is our responsibility to provide them with a safe and simple means to respond to a potentially fatal allergic reaction *effectively*.

Thank you for your protection of our children at their most vulnerable moments.

Sincerely,
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