



## State of Connecticut

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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Testimony in support of HB 6975: An Act Establishing A Taskforce to Study Life Threatening Allergies in Schools  
Education Committee  
March 11, 2015

Dear Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, Senator Boucher, Representative Lavielle and honorable members of the Education Committee:

I want to thank you for raising the concept and bill HB 6975, An Act Establishing A Taskforce to Study Life Threatening Allergies in Schools.

I introduced a similar bill with Representative McCarthy Vahey. I'm so grateful the committee drafted this bill. This issue has been a journey for me as a legislator. While serving on Fairfield's Board of Education (BOE) from 2003 through 2009 Fairfield had just started a new food allergy policy in 2004.

Fast forward to 2013, when I received a call from my constituent, Jessica Curran, regarding Fairfield's Food Allergy Policy. For nearly two years, Jessica and other parents have been working to update Fairfield policy working with the 2013 CDC standards. The BOE's policy committee took up the issue last year and had many meetings reviewing the outdated policy. Unfortunately, the committee is still spinning their wheels and hasn't implemented a comprehensive policy that protects students with life threatening food allergies.

What I learned from my many meetings, calls and emails, with parents, school administrators and BOE members over the last two years was that while the state has good guidelines, each town appears to be doing their own thing, many creating policies that are in direct conflict with CDC guidelines. This issue has created an unfortunate emotional divide between parents of children with life threatening food allergies and school administrators, staff and parents of students without allergies.

After exhausting so many avenues over the last year and trying to get guidance and assistance from the State Department of Education, State Department of Public Health, Fairfield's administration and BOE on this issue, it became clear to me that Connecticut should create a uniform policy for all school districts.

I believe this would ease the emotional divide and protect Connecticut's children with life threatening food allergies.

I look forward to working with members to move this forward.

Sincerely,

Brenda Kupchick