



April 4, 2025

Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

Senate Education Committee
1021 O Street, Room 6740
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Letter of Support for SB 568 (Niello)

Dear Chairwoman Pérez,

On behalf of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) and the more than 20 million Americans living with life-threatening food allergies, I am writing to express AAFA's strong support for SB 568 (Niello), the Epinephrine in Schools Modernization Act. AAFA is the leading patient organization for people with asthma and allergies, and the oldest asthma and allergy patient organization in the world. Kids with Food Allergies, a division of AAFA, offers tools, education, and community to families and children coping with food allergies across the country.

About 5.8 percent of children and adolescents have food allergies in the U.S., which is the equivalent at least one student in every California classroom.^{1,2} Exposure to an allergen can cause severe reactions, including anaphylaxis and, in rare cases, death. Because there is no cure for food allergies, awareness and preparedness are key for protecting health and saving lives.

Epinephrine is the only treatment for anaphylaxis. California currently requires that school districts provide **epinephrine auto-injectors** for use by school nurses or trained personnel to provide emergency medical aid to students or staff believed to be suffering from an anaphylactic reaction ([Education Code, Section 49414](#)). This is an excellent policy, but it was enacted at a time when epinephrine was only available in devices that use needles.

AAFA recently released our 2025 [State Honor Roll of Asthma and Allergy Policies for Schools](#) which identifies the states with the best public policies for people with

¹ Zablotsky, B., Black, L.I., & Akinbami, L.J. (2023). *NCHS Data Brief, no 459: Diagnosed allergic conditions in children aged 0–17 years: United States, 2021*. National Center for Health Statistics. <https://dx.doi.org/10.15620/cdc:123250>

² *National Teacher and Principal Survey, 2017–2018*. National Center for Education Statistics. https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ntps/tables/ntps1718_fitab06_t1s.asp.



asthma, food allergies, anaphylaxis and related allergic diseases in U.S. elementary, middle and high schools.³ California received Honorable Mention in the 2025 report, but did not make the Honor Roll.

The report underscores the critical importance of modernizing emergency stock medication policies to create safer learning environments for children with food allergies and asthma. Specifically, the report highlights the need to ensure schools have access to all FDA-approved epinephrine, such as epinephrine nasal spray.

There have been and will continue to be innovations in the delivery of epinephrine. The FDA will play its role in determining the safety and efficacy of these systems, but once approved, California school districts should have the option of determining which delivery systems to provide for use in schools.

In 2014, the California legislature passed on a bi-partisan basis SB 1266 (Huff) which required epinephrine in public schools, which AAFA supported. The bill text should clearly indicate that this also should apply to preschool settings, which is also an additional change that SB 568 provides. Young children while at preschools in California who have severe food allergies always need access to epinephrine to promptly treat anaphylaxis and a trained adult who can administer it.

We also support the similar Zacky FAST Act in the California Assembly, AB 2714. This legislation also helps to update stock epinephrine laws in school.

One preventable death of a young child is one too many. This requirement for schools and preschools is evidence-based and will reduce risk for children across the state. What's more, they will provide peace of mind to all of the families managing food allergies in California.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Mendez
President and Chief Executive Officer
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

³ Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, (2025). 2025 State Honor Roll™ Report. Retrieved from statehonorroll.org.