



May 29, 2025

The Honorable Emanuel "Chris" Welch
Speaker of the House
Illinois House of Representatives
300 Capitol Building
Springfield, IL

The Honorable Camille Lilly
Assistant Majority Leader
Illinois House of Representatives
632 Capitol Building
Springfield, IL

Re: Illinois' Clean Air for Healthy Equitable Schools bill HB 1923

Dear Speaker Welch and Leader Camille,

On behalf of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), I am writing in support of HB 429 that would promote healthy and clean air in schools in Illinois. AAFA is the leading patient organization for nearly 100 million Americans with asthma and allergies. AAFA is also the oldest asthma and allergy patient organization in the world, committed to saving lives and reducing the burden of disease for people with asthma and allergies through support, advocacy, education and research.

Approximately 900,000 adults and 160,000 children in Illinois have asthma. In 2021 alone, Illinois suffered 124 asthma-related deaths. Because there is no cure for asthma, effective prevention and long-term maintenance is key. Primary among these prevention measures is managing indoor air quality and reducing exposure to harmful pollutants in outdoor environments.

At AAFA, we believe that our children should be focused on learning at school, not struggling to breathe. For the children in Illinois classrooms with asthma, that struggle can feel like trying to breathe through a narrow straw. When indoor air quality is poor, common asthma triggers like dust, mold, and poor ventilation can worsen symptoms, making it harder for students to focus, participate, and stay at school. In fact, roughly one in six school absences is the result of asthma.

Improving indoor air quality in our schools is an accessible step that can prevent severe outcomes for children suffering with asthma, improve school attendance,



boost academic achievement, and support teacher health. States across the country have taken this step, including California, Nevada, Oregon, and Connecticut. In Illinois, implementing these air quality measures would help implement best practices.

When we spend nearly 90% of our time indoors, good air quality is a necessity for health. Students and teachers spend approximately 7 hours of their day in school, and it is essential that this time is spent in a healthy environment.

When indoor air quality is improved, students with asthma have one less barrier to fully participating in their education. We urge passage of HB 429 bill into law.

Sincerely,

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