

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the Maryland House
Ways and Means Committee - For the Hearing on
Public and Nonpublic Schools - Bronchodilator and Epinephrine Availability and Use - Policies HB266
February 8, 2023
SUPPORT**

Free State PTA represents over 50,000 volunteer members and families in over 500 public schools. Free State PTA is composed of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. As the state's premier and largest child advocacy organization, Free State PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education. ***House Bill 266, Public and Nonpublic Schools - Bronchodilator and Epinephrine Availability and Use - Policies , aligns with Free State PTA's principle for legislative action which states that schools must provide a safe environment where all students, teachers and staff can thrive.***

A founding principle of Free State PTA's (FSPTA) mission is to promote the safety and well-being of all children and youth. This bill requires school systems to establish a policy to obtain, administer, and train school nurses and other school personnel to administer a bronchodilator in emergency situations when a child is in respiratory distress. One quarter of high school students in Maryland have reported having asthma and one third of high school students in Baltimore City as detailed in the Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey. We have an obligation to keep these children safe in school settings. This bill also provides similar provisions for epinephrine in an emergency anaphylactic reaction.

Because children are in school much of their lives, a reaction may be experienced for the first time in a school setting. I know of a child that was 8 years old when their parents were called by the school nurse that he was coughing persistently and not feeling well. His oxygen level was down to 92%. This could have been a dangerous situation. He was diagnosed with asthma and subsequently prescriptions were brought to school. Children like him would be better served if school trained personnel were authorized to administer emergency medication when distress is identified.

Free State PTA believes this bill is vital in ensuring the wellbeing of children and therefore, strongly urges that this committee issues a **favorable report on HB266**.

Testimony is presented on the behalf of

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