



**REPRESENTATIVE DAVE GREENSPAN
HOUSE DISTRICT 16**

Chair Lehner, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 231, also known as the “Allison Rose Suhy Act.” The idea behind House Bill 231 began when a constituent in former State Representative Marlene Anielski’s district had an anaphylactic reaction due to her allergy to peanuts. Allison Rose Suhy was an 18-year-old college freshman when she died after eating a donut.

According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control, the prevalence of food allergies among children increased 18% during 1997-2007, and allergic reactions to foods have become the most common cause of anaphylactic reactions in community health settings. Children with food allergies are two to four times more likely to have asthma or other allergic conditions than those without food allergies. Food allergies affect an estimate 4%-6% of all children in the United States, and there is currently no known cure. Strict avoidance of the food allergen is the only way to prevent a reaction, but early and quick recognition and treatment can prevent serious health problems or death.

House Bill 231 seeks to address the growing concern of food allergies, by encouraging the implementation of in-service training for students and staff members employed at public grade schools about how to recognize and respond to a person experiencing an allergic reaction. House Bill 231 would add food allergy awareness training to the listing of optional trainings, and the training would qualify as a professional development activity for the renewal of educator licenses. Additionally, House Bill 231 would include age-appropriate instruction for students from kindergarten to 12th grade on food allergies and ways to assist an individual experiencing an allergic reaction.

Each state institution of higher education would also be encouraged to provide all incoming students and staff with information about food allergies including available campus resources. Such information would also be posted on the website of each state institution of higher education.

Finally, House Bill 231 would require the Department of Education to annually compile and distribute a list of companies and organizations which provide free Epi Pens to qualifying school districts. This list will be published on the Department’s website as well as sent to out to the school districts.

It is important to note that the bill does not create any sort of additional taxpayer-funded programs, but simply increases awareness about existing private programs and encourages the implementation of age-appropriate allergy safety trainings within our schools.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have at this time.