

*Testimony of*

**Jennifer Bates**  
**Newington Educator**

*Before the*  
**Education Committee**

*Re:*

**SB 287 AN ACT CONCERNING INDOOR AIR QUALITY IN SCHOOLS.**

March 6, 2024

Good afternoon, Representative Currey, Senator McCrory, Representative McCarty, Senator Berthel, and distinguished members of the Education Committee.

My name is Jennifer Bates, and I have been a special education teacher at Elizabeth Green School in Newington for 25 years. It has been an honor and a privilege to work in such an outstanding district for the duration of my career.

I testify today in support of Senate Bill 287 An Act Concerning Indoor Air Quality in Schools. I would first like to thank you for continuing your work toward improving the indoor air quality for educators and students in all of our schools.

This matter is of great importance to me. Two years ago I began having significant breathing issues at work. I have undergone breathing assessment, allergy testing, and additional blood work to isolate the issue. I have had to consult a variety of doctors from primary health care professionals to now specialists. (I am actually just leaving a doctor's appointment with a pulmonary specialist to help address these issues, an appointment I had to take time off from work to attend.) I have had a considerable increase in respiratory illnesses. This school year alone, I have had three respiratory illnesses since October, the most recent of which developed into pneumonia and required extensive treatment and medication along with extended time off work, something I have never faced prior to the last two years. These breathing issues are non-existent when I am not at work.

Newington has done their best to support my needs. I recognize these issues are much larger than one district can tackle on its own. Like many districts throughout Connecticut, several of our buildings are large and old and susceptible to air quality issues. My building has visible signs of water damage in many areas. The district is always responsive to fixing the issues as they come up, but it seems like a never-ending battle to combat the causes behind poor air quality in our schools.

If we want our educators to be able to provide the best possible education to students, and if our students are to learn and grow to their fullest potential, the air we breathe each and every day needs to be clean.

I want to thank you again for continuing your work to improve the indoor air quality of our schools. This bill demonstrates a true commitment to the health and well-being of the teachers and students in our schools. Thank you very much for your time.

