



# The Indoor Air Quality and Healthy Schools Act

118<sup>th</sup> Congress

House sponsors: Representatives Paul Tonko (D-NY) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA)

## Supporting Organization Statements:

*“Allergy & Asthma Network is pleased to support the Indoor Air Quality and Healthy Schools Act of 2024. Ensuring good air quality in schools is essential for the health and well-being of students, particularly those with asthma and allergies. Poor air quality can exacerbate symptoms, leading to increased absenteeism and decreased academic performance. At Allergy & Asthma Network, we want cleaner, healthier indoor environments to support every child's right to breathe easy and learn effectively.”*

❖ **Lynda Mitchell, CEO, Allergy & Asthma Network**

*“Our schools are aging, our climate is changing, and teachers and students are suffering from worsening air quality and inadequate ventilation systems. It is affecting their health, and we have no choice but to address it immediately. Rep. Paul Tonko's bill takes critical steps to improve indoor air quality in schools across the country by establishing a national assessment program, providing technical assistance, and creating a voluntary certification program for buildings that meet the highest indoor-air-quality standards. This legislation will keep our educators and our kids healthy and will support student learning, and that must be a top priority.”*

❖ **Randi Weingarten, AFT President**

*“As the association for scientists and professionals committed to preserving and ensuring occupational and environmental health and safety in the workplace and community, AIHA strongly supports the Indoor Air Quality and Healthy Schools Act and encourages its swift enactment into law. This bill would help protect the health of workers and communities by increasing the assessment of indoor air quality, identifying hazards, and implementing science-based solutions.”*

❖ **Lawrence Sloan, CEO of AIHA**

*“This legislation provides much-needed support for improving indoor air quality, essential for health, productivity and positive learning outcomes. As we work to decarbonize and enhance building resilience and sustainability, prioritizing healthy indoor environments is vital. Incorporating ASHRAE IAQ standards into building codes will be foundational to this goal.”*

❖ **M. Dennis Knight, 2024-25 ASHRAE President**

*“To have healthy lungs, everyone needs access to clean, healthy air – not just outdoors, but indoors, too. The Indoor Air Quality and Healthy Schools Act will build on the important work being done to improve indoor air quality at the Environmental Protection Agency. Children, with their still-developing lungs, are among the most*

*vulnerable to air pollution. An unhealthy indoor school environment can lead to negative health and education outcomes. We applaud Congressman Tonko for introducing this bill to help improve the air kids breathe.”*

❖ **Harold Wimmer, President and CEO of the American Lung Association**

*“The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) is pleased to support this legislation which takes important steps to improve indoor air quality and create healthier environments in schools. Among the nearly 7% of children with asthma, 2 out of 5 have at least one asthma attack a year. Asthma is responsible for more missed days of school – 13.8 million – than any other chronic disease. Improving indoor air quality will reduce exposure to common asthma triggers. Rep. Tonko’s legislation takes important steps toward improving indoor air quality, which ultimately means a reduction in school absenteeism and an increase in the opportunity to learn.”*

❖ **Kenneth Mendez, AAFA President and CEO**

*“The Indoor Air Quality and Healthy Schools Act of 2024 makes great strides toward keeping children safe in our schools. Roughly 40% of school-aged children have at least one chronic condition, such as asthma, which makes them more susceptible to indoor air pollutants like mold, wildfire smoke, and other irritants. School districts must have the resources they need to improve indoor air quality for their students and teachers. This legislation would deliver that aid, and ensure that our children learn in healthy, safe buildings that will allow them to grow and thrive.”*

❖ **Bruce Lesley, President, First Focus Campaign for Children**

*“Polluted indoor air in schools is a well-documented serious public health concern that affects tens of millions of US school children and school personnel every day. Poor indoor air results in less learning, worse test scores, and more absences. The children hardest hit are those with preexisting health or learning problems. We strongly support Congressman Tonko’s Indoor Air Quality and Healthy Schools Act of 2024. It advances US EPA’s three key strategies to improve indoor air quality: source control of pollutants which is highly cost-effective, improved ventilation, and the filtration of indoor air. Every child deserves clean air in school.”*

❖ **Claire L. Barnett, MBA, Executive Director, Healthy Schools Network**

*“We commend U.S. Rep. Paul Tonko for his visionary leadership and relentless dedication to improving the indoor environments where our children learn, and we also recognize the tremendous efforts of U.S. Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick for his unwavering commitment to improving our schools. By championing legislation that focuses on indoor air quality in schools, Reps. Tonko and Fitzpatrick are addressing a critical yet often neglected aspect of student health and academic performance. We thank them for their tireless work to introduce this pioneering legislation, which will advance clean indoor air in our nation’s schools and help ensure that all students are able to learn in a safe and healthy environment.”*

❖ **Rachel Hodgdon, President and CEO of the International WELL Building Institute and the founding director of the Center for Green Schools**

*“Unlike drinking water or food, we can’t choose the air we breathe. Thanks to Representatives Tonko and Fitzpatrick’s leadership, the Indoor Air Quality and Healthy Schools Act will ensure that we and future generations all have clean indoor air to breathe.”*

❖ **Dr. Paula Olsiewski, Contributing Scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security**

*“Every child deserves to breathe clean air, whether they’re playing outside or learning in a classroom— and for far too long, indoor air quality in schools has been overlooked. EPA estimates that indoor levels of air pollution may routinely be two to five times higher than outdoor levels, and poor indoor air quality can lead to serious health problems and reduced learning and academic performance. Moms Clean Air Force is proud to endorse the Indoor Air Quality and Healthy Schools Act as a critical step towards protecting children’s developing lungs and brains and creating the healthy school environments that they need to thrive.”*

❖ **Elizabeth Bechard, Senior Policy Analyst, Moms Clean Air Force**

*“SMACNA is an international trade association representing 3,500 contributing contractor firms and is a national leader in promoting indoor air quality and excellence in the sheet metal and air conditioning industry. SMACNA members are responsible for effectively delivering the clean air Americans breathe in schools, commercial and public offices, homes, and hospitals; and for the comfortable, healthy, and safe living environments in which our citizens live. We are proud to endorse the innovative Tonko - Fitzpatrick bipartisan school indoor Air Quality and Healthy Schools Act. Our firms are leaders in the implementation of these IAQ mechanical systems in existing buildings and facilities and in new construction projects. Our firms know well that countless schools nationwide will benefit from such a valuable federal effort protecting the health and well being of America’s school children, teachers and educational employees.”*

❖ **Stan Kolbe, Executive Director for Government and Political Affairs, SMACNA**

*“We spend 90% of our time indoors, and we pay far too little attention to the quality of the air we breathe. This is a bipartisan issue that is critical not only for public health, as we saw all too painfully during the pandemic, but also for the productivity of workers and the ability of children to stay focused and learn. Rep. Tonko is to be commended for zeroing in on this topic with this legislation, and the U.S. Green Building Council proudly supports it. We appreciate Reps. Tonko and Fitzpatrick putting this issue on Congress’ radar and are eager to work with them to get this bill passed into law.”*

❖ **Ben Evans, Federal Legislative Director, U.S. Green Building Council**

*“WE ACT for Environmental Justice has long advocated that everyone has the right to a healthy home. The Indoor Air Quality and Schools Act of 2024 is a critical step in supporting the health and well-being of all, especially for environmental justice communities unduly impacted by poor indoor and outdoor air quality. We are grateful for Representative Tonko’s leadership to address unhealthy indoor environments and we call on Congress to swiftly pass this legislation.”*

❖ **Anastasia Gordon, Federal Policy Director, WE ACT for Environmental Justice**

## **Supporting Organizations**

The Indoor Air Quality and Healthy Schools Act is supported by: **Allergy and Asthma Network, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Federation of Teachers (AFT), American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), ASHRAE, American Lung Association, Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, Austin Air Systems, Ltd., Climate Code Blue, First Focus Campaign for Children, Healthy Schools Network, International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART), International WELL Building Institute, Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, Moms Clean Air Force, RMI, National Education Association, Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association (SMACNA), U.S. Green Building Council, and WE ACT for Environmental Justice.**