

Written Testimony of
Dinie James, High School Counselor
Stamford Public Schools,
Before the
Committee on Public Health
Regarding
Raised House Bill No. 5431
An Act Concerning Indoor Air Quality in Schools
March 5, 2020

Dear Legislators,

My name is Dinie James, and I am writing in support of HB 5431.

I have worked for Stamford Public Schools for about 20 years.

I have had headaches, nausea, sinus infections, cough, and extreme fatigue. I even experienced dizziness and was sent to the emergency room. I get through each day exhausted. At the end of the week, I will spend my weekend in bed and return to do it all over again.

During vacations I feel better, and when I return to the building, the cycle of symptoms starts again. In the fall of 2018, my symptoms escalated to the point where it became even more difficult. Upon entering school buildings, I have a runny nose or itchy eyes. I start to cough, and the coughing becomes extreme. The coughing will NOT stop. A doctor told me that I had acute bronchitis and prescribed medicine, but the symptoms came back each time I returned to my work environment. I suffered and suffered and felt as though I was being punished for getting sick. I was removed and involuntarily transferred to another school, where I had another sick reaction that sent me again to the emergency room. This constant cycle has had no resolution for me, since the symptoms continue to return, and it takes longer for me to get better.

I enjoyed my work as a high school counselor and reaped many fruits of my labor until I became sick with environmental illness due to mold and poor air quality. Students are our future. Educators prepare, teach, and guide students to that end. It is imperative that a healthy environment is provided and maintained.

Thank you for your consideration.