

Committee on Education
Michigan House of Representatives

6/13/2024

Chair Koleszar and members of the Committee on Education,

I am writing today in support of HB 5329 of 2023: Seizure Safe Schools Act. I'm happy that Representative Kara Hope, my local Representative, took the initiative to introduce and sponsor this bill because it's so vitally important.

My 15-year-old child was diagnosed with epilepsy when she was in the 2nd grade. Throughout her academic career, it has fallen on me to follow up with school personnel to make sure she has the support she needs. Initially, while her district was extremely supportive, I had to go visit with each of her teachers to explain her seizures and answer their questions. I know that several of them were uncomfortable but very willing and eager to listen and learn. We worked with the school nurse and administration to put a seizure plan in place. As she moved out of elementary school, and started to have six teachers a day, it became obvious that a 504 plan was necessary to ensure all personnel had easy and quick access to her seizure plan and medical information. Even with the 504 plan in place, her teachers were nervous about making sure they were knowledgeable enough about her condition. On several occasions, I met with her teachers to answer their questions and provide basic information about seizures and how to respond to them. My daughter's primary seizures are complex partial seizures – they're different than the typical tonic clonic (grand mal) seizure that most people envision. In fact, many people don't understand that there are different types of seizures; they can present in different ways and require varying levels of care in each case.

In following the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan, I became aware of the Seizure Safe Schools initiative. It was introduced in the Michigan Legislature in the past and sadly stalled in committee. I'm so happy that you are giving this legislation the attention it deserves. I wish I could be there today in person to share my family's story, but I hope this letter will serve to explain my enthusiasm for this bill. It is important that school personnel have the resources they need to effectively respond when a student has a seizure at school. School personnel should not be put in a situation where they aren't prepared to assist a student in a medical emergency. It's unfair and unsafe for both the student and the personnel.

Anyone can develop epilepsy at any age. According to the Epilepsy Foundation - one in twenty-six people will develop epilepsy during their lifetime (<https://www.epilepsy.com/what-is-epilepsy>). It's a common neurological disorder and schools should be required and provided the support to ensure their employees can respond if a situation occurs on school grounds.

The components of the Seizure Safe Schools Act, as outlined by the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan, are simple and common sense: requiring training on recognizing seizures and first-aid response, mandating seizure action plans are maintained in student records, ensuring that FDA-approved medications are accessible and able to be administered to a student with epilepsy, and a Good Samaritan clause. (<https://epilepsymichigan.org/learn/public-policy-advocacy/>). The training requirements included in the Seizure Safe Schools bills and the educational materials provided by the Epilepsy Foundation of

Michigan would not only help ensure that children with epilepsy get the care, protection and respect they need but, given the first aid training piece, would ultimately benefit all students and school personnel.

I urge you to pass this bill out of committee and hope that it will receive a floor vote and ultimately be signed into law – it will help so many people.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J Malinowski", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jennifer Malinowski
5530 Saddlewood, Holt, MI 48842
517-282-4174 (c)