



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew Gounardes

Senator Gounardes and Assemblymember Rosenthal Join Bay Ridge High Schooler and Health Experts to Call for EpiPens in Public Places

ANDREW GOUNARDES January 26, 2024

| ISSUE: **PUBLIC HEALTH, ALLERGIES**



State Senator Andrew Gounardes with Lucia and John Zaremba.

View a recording of the press event [here](#).

After a young Brooklynite saw how an EpiPen saved her younger brother's life during an allergy attack, she partnered with lawmakers to create legislation that ensures epinephrine is available at large public venues like concert halls, stadiums and ballparks.

Senator Andrew Gounardes and Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal joined Poly Prep student Lucia Zaremba and health advocates today to push for legislation ([S.1078A/A.2885A](#)) that would require life-saving epinephrine auto-injectors in large public venues across New York State. The bill would also require venue staff to be trained to administer the devices.

Epinephrine auto-injectors, commonly referred to as EpiPens, are devices that deliver epinephrine, a life-saving medication used when someone is experiencing anaphylaxis, an allergy emergency that can cause death in less than 15 minutes. Zaremba, a junior in high school, began advocating for greater accessibility to the tools when her brother John suffered severe anaphylactic shock after eating a steak. Unbeknownst to John, he had become allergic to peanuts, tree nuts, sesame seeds, legumes and red meat after developing alpha-gal syndrome.

More than [50 million Americans](#) suffer from allergies, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 33 million have food allergies specifically, according to [FARE](#), including nearly [two million](#) in New York—a number larger than the combined populations of Manhattan and Rochester. The CDC says food allergies are responsible for approximately [30,000 emergency department visits and 150–200 deaths](#) each year.

Epinephrine devices are the only effective treatment for anaphylaxis, and such tools are already required in day care centers in New York City. To Lucia, it seemed like “common sense” that there be life-saving epinephrine in all large public venues, as Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) are now. She pitched the idea to Senator Gounardes, who introduced the legislation in the State Senate. Assemblymember Rosenthal, who has long championed widespread access to and education about auto-injectors, has introduced companion legislation in the State Assembly.

The bill would require places of public assembly—which include stadiums, ballparks, gymnasiums, concert or recital halls, theaters, indoor and outdoor amphitheaters and auditoriums—to stock such devices on premises and to have staff trained in their use.

“Families like Lucia's shouldn't have to live in fear every time they go out to dinner or an event,” said **State Senator Andrew Gounardes**. “Anaphylaxis can be deadly, and when Lucia told me her family's story, I knew we had to take action. By ensuring these places have life-saving EpiPens and are prepared to use them, families can relax and enjoy themselves without worrying about their loved ones' safety.”

“People with allergies should be able to attend a concert or baseball game and not have to worry if the venue is equipped to protect them,” said **Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal (D/WF - Manhattan), Chair of the Assembly Committee on Housing**. “I have been proud to champion and pass legislation over the years to expand access to epinephrine, and this is another common-sense proposal that will save lives. When an allergic reaction occurs, having access to an epinephrine auto-injector is critical and large public venues in New York State must be prepared. I look forward to working with Senator Gounardes and Lucia and her family to pass this bill into law.”

“We must act to make it mandatory that places of public assembly have EpiPens available,” said **Lucia Zaremba**. “It is our duty to see S1078 through because this bill will absolutely save lives. I know first-hand both about the deadly danger of food allergies, and I also know from personal experience that EpiPens save lives! Without one, my brother would not be here today. Our point is very simple: if you are going to serve food in a place of public assembly, then you *must* have an EpiPen on hand to protect people with food allergies!”

“The Elijah-Alavi Foundation, with its heart rooted in national advocacy, awareness, and education concerning food allergies and asthma, particularly in marginalized communities,

fully supports the lifesaving initiative championed by Senator Andrew Gounardes and Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal,” said **Thomas Silvera, MSHS-PH, Co-founder and Vice President of the Elijah-Alavi Foundation.** “Ensuring that EpiPens are as ubiquitous as AEDs in public spaces is more than a legislative move—it’s a societal imperative. Our foundation’s dedication to this cause is unwavering, as every measure that enhances the safety and well-being of individuals with allergies is a monumental step toward the inclusivity and health equity we strive for. This bill is not just a change; it’s a beacon of hope that signals a brighter, safer future for all New Yorkers with life-threatening allergies.”

“FARE, the nation’s largest and leading non-profit dedicated to food allergy advocacy, is grateful to Senator Gounardes and Assemblymember Rosenthal for their leadership in introducing and championing this legislation,” said **Jason Linde, Senior Vice President of FARE.** “As someone who was born and raised in rural upstate New York with food allergies, these bills are an important step forward to protecting and saving the lives of the more than two million New Yorkers with life-threatening food allergies. FARE is committed to doing everything possible to pass this legislation into law.”

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RELATED LEGISLATION

2023-S1078A

- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Requires places of public assembly to maintain epinephrine auto-injector devices and to have at least one employee who is trained in its use

January 10, 2023

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **Andrew Gounardes**

Do you support this bill?
