



MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

S278A (Gounardes) / A1559A (Simon) Climate Education Curriculum for All Public Schools

The New York State Public Health Association (NYSPHA) is a non-profit, membership organization comprised of over 700 dedicated New York State public health professionals, organizations, and advocates who work tirelessly to improve the health of our communities. We recognize the significance of this bill in advancing the health and wellness of New Yorkers, and we would like to commend the bill's sponsors for their commitment to addressing pressing public health concerns.

NYSPHA is partnering with the Climate and Resilience Education Task Force to strongly support **Bill S278A/A1559A**, to establish a course of instruction and learning expectations on climate education in all of New York State's public elementary and secondary schools. We recognize that **comprehensive, interdisciplinary, and age-appropriate climate education is essential for New York to ultimately protect the health of all New Yorkers from the threats of climate change.**

As stated in an article from the Columbia Climate School, **"Young people recognize that climate change is going to shape their futures—where they live, the work they will do, and their quality of life. They need climate education in order to develop green skills, adapt to the harsh reality of a warming world, and understand how to combat climate change. In the U.S., more than 86 percent of teachers and 84 percent of parents support climate change education in schools.** Progress is being made in some states, but on the whole students are not learning enough about climate science quickly enough to give them the knowledge and tools they will need to cope with the impacts of climate change." Knowledge of the health impacts of climate change and understanding the needs of vulnerable communities are critical to address the public health threats of climate change.

New York's youngest citizens deserve a comprehensive education that equips them with the understanding and skills needed to navigate the complex challenges of our time, including protecting the health of our communities from the threats of climate change.

NYSPHA strongly endorses the passage of Bill S278A/A1559A in the 2024 Legislative Session and recognizes its potential to foster a more informed, prepared, and empowered generation of New Yorkers.

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