



02/04/22

House Appropriations Committee
1000 Bank Street
Richmond, VA 23218

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee,

On behalf of the Epilepsy Foundation, we urge you to support HB 1178 which would require the public posting of Seizure First Aid signs in the workplace. The legislation could have a positive impact on the safety of not just those with epilepsy, but everyone in the workplace, including fellow employees and in the case of businesses, patrons. The Epilepsy Foundation believes the public posting and accessibility of these signs is crucial. To help achieve that goal, The Epilepsy Foundation provides these signs in 14 different languages for free on our website at this link: <https://www.epilepsy.com/living-epilepsy/seizure-first-aid-and-safety/first-aid-seizures-stay-safe-side>

The Epilepsy Foundation is the leading national voluntary health organization that speaks on behalf of at least 3.4 million Americans living with epilepsy and seizures. We foster the wellbeing of children and adults affected by seizures through research programs, educational activities, advocacy, and direct services. Epilepsy is a medical condition that produces reoccurring seizures—which are caused by disturbances in the electrical activity of the brain and affect a variety of mental and physical functions. Approximately 1 in 26 Americans will develop epilepsy, and 1 in 10 people will experience a seizure at some point in their lifetime. Epilepsy is the 4th most common neurological disorder in the United States, and it is estimated that 150,000 new cases are diagnosed annually. In Virginia, there are 84,800 people living with epilepsy, including Jamie Van Cleave, a lead advocate for this bill who has been working to help people with epilepsy for several years now as part of the Epilepsy Foundation's Teens Speak Up Program, a groundbreaking initiative that allows teens living with epilepsy to connect directly with their elected officials and advocate on behalf of the epilepsy community in their state. Last year, Jamie helped pass Seizure Safe Schools legislation that was signed into law (the Jamie and Brie Strong Act - SB 1322).

The Epilepsy Foundation is leading the charge to help build a Seizure Safe Nation through public health initiatives, education and awareness-building, and advocacy. Twelve states have passed Seizure Safe Schools legislation, an Epilepsy Foundation-led effort to help to keep students safe during the school day by requiring school personnel to be trained on seizure recognition and seizure first aid, every student with epilepsy to have a Seizure Action Plan on file and administration of FDA-approved treatments in the school setting. This bill would be an excellent complement to this work—helping protect adults with epilepsy in the workplace, allowing them to have long and successful careers.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 25% of the general public say they would be nervous around a person with epilepsy. While there are many different types of



seizures, during many of them a person may be confused, not aware of what is going on, or unconscious. A person could get hurt during a seizure, or a seizure could last too long, or the seizures could cluster. For most seizures, knowing how to help someone with basic seizure first aid is all that is needed and can make the difference and save a life.

A seizure can happen to anyone, at any place, at any time. Having signage visible at the workplace is a quick and effective way to convey to employees how to help someone in the instance of a seizure, as well as alerting employees to know what NOT to do, which can be just as important. The Epilepsy Foundation supports this bill, and we urge you to vote for/sponsor HB 1178 to ensure that people living with epilepsy or seizure disorders are able to work safely and successfully in whatever field they choose, as well as to ensure the safety of the general public. If you have any questions, please contact Dominique Brown, Senior Manager, State Relations and Policy, Epilepsy Foundation at dbrown@efa.org

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Laura S. Thrall'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Laura Thrall
President & CEO
Epilepsy Foundation