



# The Indoor Air Quality and Healthy Schools Act

118<sup>th</sup> Congress

House sponsors: Representatives Brian Fitzpatrick (PA-1)  
and Paul Tonko (NY-20)

## Poor Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) is a serious threat

- People spend 90% percent of their time indoors, and EPA studies have shown that **contaminants can be 2-5 times—and occasionally 100 times—higher** than outdoors.
- EPA's Science Advisory Board has consistently ranked **poor IAQ among the top five environmental risks to public health, and over 3 million people globally die prematurely each year from disease caused by poor IAQ.**
- Exposure to radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer, causing an estimated 21,000 deaths annually in the United States, while exposure to excessive particulate matter has been linked to asthma, COPD, cardiovascular disease, and cancer.

## Despite its impact, IAQ often goes unaddressed

- While outdoor air pollution is far from solved, the United States has made significant progress over the past 50 years in reducing dangerous emissions thanks to the Clean Air Act.
- **IAQ efforts have historically been underappreciated and underfunded.**
  - No similar law to the Clean Air Act exists for indoor contaminants.
  - IAQ improvements have primarily been achieved through voluntary adoption of best practices.
  - This progress has been slow and uneven due to the tremendous range of building types, conditions, age, and ownership across the country.
- The **COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of effective ventilation and filtration systems** in buildings and brought renewed attention on the need for homes, schools, and workplaces to be designed and retrofitted to foster health and well-being while being resilient against power outages, wildfires, heatwaves, and other risks.

## Congress must better support EPA's IAQ efforts!

The **Indoor Air Quality and Healthy Schools Act** would ensure that EPA has the authority and resources necessary to better protect public health from poor indoor air quality. Specifically, the bill:

- ❖ Updates, expands, and codifies the work of EPA's Indoor Environments Division;
- ❖ Requires EPA to establish and regularly update a list of significant indoor contaminants, and develop health-based, voluntary guidelines to reduce exposure risks to these contaminants;
- ❖ Directs EPA to develop or recognize one or more voluntary certifications for buildings designed, built, operated, and maintained to prevent or minimize indoor air health risks; and
- ❖ Establishes a regularly updated national assessment of IAQ in schools and childcare facilities, and supports development of technical assistance, guidelines, and best practices to improve the IAQ conditions of these facilities.