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**House of Representatives**  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** All House Members

**FROM:** Representative Angel Cruz

**SUBJECT:** Introduction of Legislation – Peanut Free Zones in Schools and Child Day Care Centers

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In the near future, I plan to introduce legislation regarding peanut/tree nut allergies among children. This legislation will require peanut/tree nut free tables in school cafeterias when a student is known to have a peanut/tree allergy, as well as require the Department of Health to develop guidelines regarding reasonable accommodations to be made in child day care centers to limit exposure to food allergens by children.

As you may know, food allergies are an increasing food safety and public health concern in the United States, especially among children. In fact, the National Institutes of Health recognizes that food allergies are a life-threatening and debilitating disease for more than 12 million Americans, including more than 4 million children. Furthermore, food allergies are increasing at an alarming rate as the number of children diagnosed with a peanut allergy doubled over the past five years. For many children, eating even a trace amount of an allergenic food can induce a life-threatening reaction, including severe vomiting, swelling of the tongue and throat, loss of consciousness, and even death in a relatively short period of time. This is cause for grave concern as many of the most common allergens (peanuts, tree nuts, milk, egg, soy, wheat, fish, and shellfish) are staples of the average school child's diet.

As there is currently no cure for these potentially fatal allergies, the only certain path to keep children safe is by providing children suffering from severe food allergies with safe environments in schools and child day care centers. This legislation would provide for that safety by offering a safe place for students to sit in the school cafeteria, as well as for much needed guidelines to help make our younger children safe within their schools and child day care centers. These guidelines would provide the best measurable protection within the learning environment, as well as help to meet the demands of the dramatically increasing number of children affected by food allergies.

Should you wish to join me in helping the many children of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania who suffer from food allergies by providing them with a safe learning environment, please contact Christina Consylman at [cconsylm@pahouse.net](mailto:cconsylm@pahouse.net) or 717-787-1407.