

Thank you for having me here today. My name is Carly Klein and I am 16 years old. I am allergic to peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, shellfish, apples, kiwi, all fruits with pits and chick peas.

Many people treat food allergies as an inconvenience. For me, they are life threatening. I can't describe how terrifying it is to eat, knowing that I am one bite away from a severe reaction or possibly even death. It starts with an itch in my throat before my airway begins to close. I try to manage the panic that sets in as I realize that it is becoming more and more difficult to breathe. I always carry epinephrine, but I know it doesn't always work.

As scary as it can be, my parents have tried to give me normal childhood experiences. I go to school. I go to camp and I travel. I even eat in restaurants, which has always been a challenge. Even though I know what questions to ask before eating, how to order, and how to explain my allergies, I know I am always at risk from something I can't even see. If a utensil or preparation surface has been used with something I am allergic to and hasn't been thoroughly washed and touches my food, I will have a reaction. Sometimes, I bring my own food, or just don't eat, to be safe. As a teenager, this affects my personal life as well. There are times that I am not invited to social gatherings because eating with me "is just too difficult" leaving me to feel bullied and excluded.

My most recent anaphylactic reaction, was due to cross contamination. I ordered a sandwich that did not contain anything I was allergic to, then thoroughly explained all of my food allergies to the waitress, which she wrote down. I have no way of knowing why as soon as I took a bite, I started sneezing and hives broke out across my face. My eyes began to itch and swell. I started to feel the tingle in my throat that happens just before my throat closes and I am unable to breath. I immediately took Benadryl and gave myself epinephrine. I was rushed to the emergency room where they put in an IV to give me steroids and more anti-histamine. The

epinephrine makes me shake and feel uneasy. The steroids make my heart race. The combination of the after effects of the reaction and all the medication makes me very sick. I stayed at the hospital for 4 hours so I could be watched to make sure the reaction did not come back, which has happened to me before.

These are just the physical effects. As I said, my allergies can also be isolating. I have been bullied by my peers. I have been teased and called names. I also feel bullied by adults when I hear insensitive, uneducated remarks, like the incident in the Clawson School district. When it was mentioned that 20 kids in one elementary school had food allergies, a school board member said, "You should just shoot them." Also, I read an article online about the 99 problems with flying. Number 8 was "those aholes whose nut allergies have ruined peanuts on the planes for everyone". Food allergies aren't funny. The Wednesday before Thanksgiving, my lacrosse coach's dear friend, Nancy Swink, lost her 19 year old son, Chandler. His death was from an anaphylactic reaction to peanuts. In the past 20 months, there were 15 reported deaths in the U.S. due to food allergies. This is nothing to joke about.

Senate Bill number 730 becoming a law would give me and others like me who suffer with anaphylactic allergies to food the safety and protection that is necessary. Although it will always be my responsibility to communicate my food allergies and to be cautious, it would be life altering, and potentially life saving, if restaurant employees were trained to help me avoid potentially fatal mistakes. Your approval will also send a strong message to the public about the real and serious risks that people with food allergies face every single day.

Thank you for the opportunity to hear about my experiences and why this bill becoming a law will have such a positive impact on my life and the lives of so many others.