

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 23, 2015

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Price
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart, Ranking Member Price, Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

In considering the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 appropriations bills for the Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies and for the Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies, we respectfully request, respectively, \$120 million for HUD's Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control, including \$25 million for the Healthy Homes Program, and \$29 million to fully support the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.

The annual costs of lead poisoning to society are over \$50 billion. There are more than 500,000 children from one to five years old with blood lead levels above 5 micrograms per deciliter in the U.S., levels that can lead to lifelong cognitive damage. Even low levels of lead cause brain damage, and the CDC has determined that there is no "safe" level of lead for a child. Levels as low as 1 microgram lead per deciliter can result in measurable reductions in IQ. In 2010, there were more than 12 million children in the U.S. with blood lead levels above this threshold. Worse, children may not show obvious symptoms, but lead can cause damage to the child's central nervous system, brain, kidneys, nerves, and blood cells. African-American children are three times more likely than white children to experience lead poisoning. All of the costs of lead poisoning are even more regrettable when one considers that lead poisoning is 100% preventable.

Providing the Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control with \$120 million in FY 2016 is critical to its continued success. The President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children reports that, "despite progress, lead poisoning remains one of the top childhood environmental health problems today." There are 24 million homes in the U.S. with peeling or chipping lead-based paint or high levels of lead in dust. Since 1993, HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes has offered grants, performed research, enforced regulations, and reached out to communities, all of which has contributed to a reduction in childhood lead poisoning cases by 70 percent. HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes program has successfully created 208,000 lead-safe units, ensured that over 186,000 additional units are lead-safe, and addressed health and safety conditions in over 20,000 substandard housing units. HUD estimates that the number of children under 5 with blood lead levels above 5 micrograms per deciliter in 2010 would have included an additional 265,000 children if not for HUD programs' actions to control hazards in these housing units.

The health improvements triggered by HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes saved billions of dollars by increasing productivity and decreasing medical and special education costs. In 2009, there was a return of \$17-\$221 per dollar invested in lead hazard control and a net savings of \$181-269 billion. Maintaining funding for the Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes program is a cost-effective way to keep children healthy, reduce unnecessary medical and education costs, and strengthen the economy.

The CDC is the only agency that keeps track of where, how, and when children are exposed to lead. This surveillance information is essential for health and housing agencies to best target funds and enforcement to the highest risk areas. With a funding level of \$29 million in FY16 for the Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, CDC will be able to help 36 communities implement prevention strategies such as inspecting all units in multi-family housing when a child with a high blood lead level is identified in one unit; canvassing high risk neighborhoods to conduct lead inspections; partnering with local agencies to ensure compliance with lead-based paint requirements; and coordinating with home visiting programs to identify and refer high risk homes for support in obtaining lead-safe housing. CDC's lead poisoning prevention and healthy homes efforts prevent approximately 100,000 children from being lead poisoned each year.

Thank you for your continued support of lead poisoning prevention and healthy housing. We greatly appreciate your leadership and consideration of these requests.

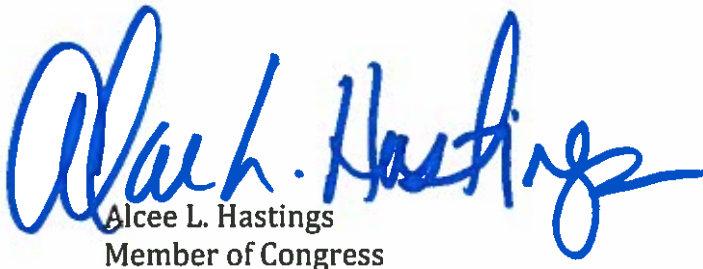
Sincerely,



Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress



David Cicilline
Member of Congress

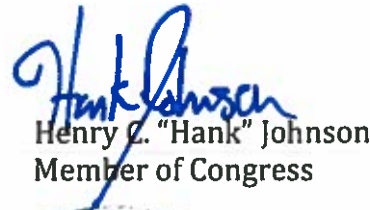

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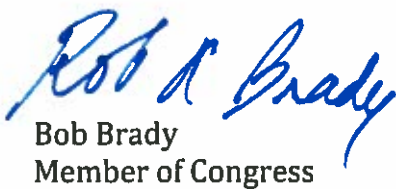

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