

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 17, 2016

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, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, 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:

We respectfully request that you fully fund efforts to prevent lead poisoning and promote healthy housing as you write the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 appropriations bills for your respective subcommittees. We ask that you provide \$35 million to fully support the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention program, which would allow the program to expand its surveillance of childhood lead poisoning, and we further ask you to return the name of the program to "Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention". We also urge you to provide at least \$176 million for the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes, including \$30 million for the Healthy Homes program and \$5 million for Lead Technical Studies Grant Program, which addresses additional home health hazards.

The continuing crisis in Flint, Michigan is a painful reminder of why lead poisoning is a threat to public health. Both HUD and the CDC play critical roles in preventing, identifying, and responding to lead contamination in communities like Flint across the country. Even before Flint, 4,997 Michigan children were poisoned by lead in 2014 with the vast majority having been exposed to lead-based paint hazards in the home. Furthermore, hundreds of thousands of children aged one to five years old in the U.S. have blood lead levels above 5 micrograms per deciliter. We must adequately invest in national lead poisoning prevention programs.

Even small amounts of lead can cause serious health problems. The impact of lead poisoning ranges from reductions in cognitive function, developmental delays, behavior modification, learning disabilities, seizures, comas, and even death. Furthermore, as we've seen in Flint, lead

poisoning continues to disproportionately impact low-income areas and communities of color, contributing to racial, health, and economic disparities across the country. The effects of lead poisoning on children are especially harmful, and the CDC has determined that there is no “safe” level of lead for a child. The annual costs of lead poisoning to society are over \$50 billion, and these costs are especially regrettable since lead poisoning is 100 percent preventable.

Providing the CDC’s Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention program with \$35 million in FY 2017 will allow lead poisoning surveillance to be conducted nationally. Unfortunately, current surveillance is limited to 32 states and the District of Columbia due to past funding cuts. No other agency or organization in the country collects this information, which is then used to identify high blood lead level outbreaks more quickly and develop more rapid responses. Additionally, the CDC will be able to help communities implement strategies to prevent lead poisoning. The CDC’s current efforts prevent approximately 100,000 children from being poisoned by lead each year. Properly funding this program is essential to continuing the progress made in lead poisoning prevention.

Furthermore, returning the name of this program to “Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention” will allow for a more holistic approach when conducting home assessments. Other hazards in the home, such as radon, carbon monoxide poisoning, and pests, can cause injury and disease. Allowing for home assessments to inspect, collect data, and perform interventions on a broad array of home health hazards in a single visit makes practical sense and is more cost efficient.

Providing HUD’s Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes with \$176 million in FY 2017 is critical to its continued success. Since 1993, this office has pursued several strategies, which have together contributed to a 70 percent reduction in childhood lead poisoning cases. Furthermore, this office has successfully created 208,000 lead-safe units, ensured that over 186,000 additional units are lead-safe, and addressed health conditions in over 20,000 substandard housing units. HUD estimates that the number of children under age five with blood lead levels above five micrograms per deciliter in 2010 would have included an additional 265,000 children if not for HUD’s actions to control hazards in these housing units. HUD’s Lead Technical Studies Grant Program has helped achieve major breakthroughs such as identifying improved methods of hazard identification and control. A \$5 million appropriation will continue increasing the already high return on investment provided by this HUD office. Properly funding HUD’s programs is a cost-effective way to keep children healthy and strengthen the economy.

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 N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress

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Robert A. Brady  
Member of Congress

*Jim Langevin*

James R. Langevin  
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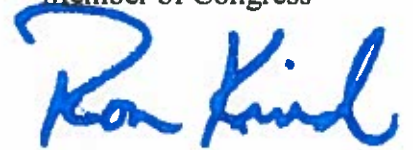
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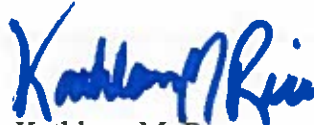
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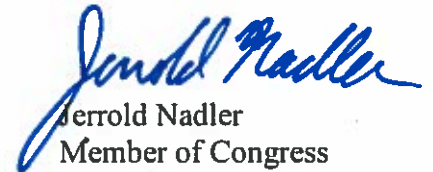
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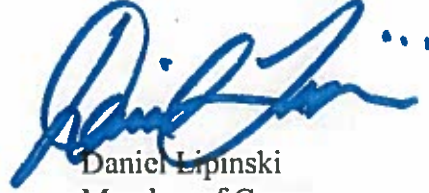
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