



National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition

The Honorable David Price
Chair
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development and Related
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development and Related
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

May 1, 2020

Dear Chair Price and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart:

On behalf of the National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition, we would like to express our appreciation and thanks for the wonderful support for lead poisoning prevention and healthy homes received in the Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations bill. In particular, we applaud the increase from \$279 million to \$290 million for the Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The current COVID-19 crisis has wreaked a heavy social and financial toll on the U.S. The significance of home-based health hazards is more important than ever as millions of Americans are currently homebound in response to the ongoing pandemic. As you consider the Fiscal Year 2021 funding bill, we urge you to continue to support the vital work of this office and further increase funding to a total of \$606 million, including \$500 million for HUD's Lead Paint program, \$100 million for the Healthy Homes Program, and \$6 million for the Lead Technical Studies Program. Additionally, the Coalition supports maintaining report language that encourages coordination between HUD's Healthy Homes Program and the Department of Energy's Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP).

Across the country, millions of families are living in unhealthy housing conditions, struggling with issues like broken heating and plumbing systems, damaged or leaking roofs, mold, exposed wiring, and toxic chemicals. Overall, 40% of U.S. homes have at least one significant health or safety risk that places American families at risk.

HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes has directly addressed lead and other housing-related health hazards over the last two decades through programs that treat individual units for lead hazards, improve lead safety with enforcement actions, and upgrade substandard housing with healthy homes improvements. It is crucial that we continue to make strong investments in programs that help respond to lead contamination and other health hazards before more families suffer needlessly.

The monetary benefits far outweigh the costs. A recent study shows that removing lead paint hazards from older housing provides at least \$1.39 return for every \$1 invested. By providing the Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes with \$606 million in FY21, we can ensure that this critical initiative will continue protecting families from these preventable health hazards.

The National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition is a broad, voluntary coalition of over 400 organizations working to improve housing conditions nationwide. The coalition promotes policies for safe and healthy housing in the United States, with special emphasis on those who are disproportionately impacted. Congress should protect the most vulnerable citizens, children, and the elderly. This funding will help to accomplish that aim. These vital programs must be funded in order to support healthy housing for all.

Thank you for your consideration of our request and for your continued support of lead poisoning prevention and healthy homes. The nation's children will benefit enormously from your leadership.

Please contact Sarah Goodwin at sarah@nshhcoalition.org if we can provide further information.

Sincerely,

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