



# National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition

## Letters from the National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition to Members of Congress (May 1, 2020)

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*The National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition is a broad, voluntary coalition working to improve housing conditions nationwide through education and outreach to key national stakeholders and federal public decision makers. The coalition promotes policies for safe and healthy housing in the United States with special emphasis on those who are disproportionately impacted. Learn more about the coalition at <http://bit.ly/NSHHC>.*



## National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition

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The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

May 1, 2020

Dear Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

On behalf of the National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition, we would like to express our appreciation and thanks for the wonderful support lead poisoning prevention and healthy homes received in the Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations bill.

The current COVID-19 crisis has wreaked a heavy social and financial toll on the U.S. The pandemic is forcing more individuals, families, and children to remain homebound, increasing their exposure to housing hazards. As you consider the Fiscal Year 2021 funding bill, we urge you to continue to support the vital work of the Center for Environmental Health at CDC. We know the CDC effectively responds to a wide variety of crises, as we are seeing now. However, lead is its own tragic decades-long crisis. In response to this, we recommend increased funding for the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program from \$37 million to \$100 million, increased funding for the National Environmental Health Tracking Network from \$34 million to \$40 million, and increased funding for the National Asthma Control Program from \$30 million to \$34 million. All of these programs work to protect children and others from housing-related health hazards.

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.

While the percentage of children tested with high blood lead has decreased over 90% in the past 20 years, 270,000 children still have blood lead levels above the CDC reference value. The CDC's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program currently provides grants to 54 states, cities, and counties. It conducts needed surveillance of children exposed to lead, provides national data on childhood lead poisoning, ensures that children receive necessary case management, and enables local jurisdictions to take action before children are exposed to lead instead of reacting only after they have been harmed. Screening and surveillance data currently provide the foundation for targeting community prevention activities to areas where the risk is

highest, and increasing funding for this program to \$100 million will allow this program to offer increased surveillance grants to all 50 states.

CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program supports environmental public health tracking and data networks 25 states and one city. This program has 20 datasets, 107 indicators, and 419 health measures, ranging from asthma to drinking water quality to carbon monoxide exposure, that are used by state and local health officials to prevent sickness and death. Increased funding for this program from \$34 to \$40 million would support at least three additional states and should be viewed as a down payment toward funding all 50 states and DC.

CDC's National Asthma Control Program funds states, localities, and other organizations to improve asthma surveillance, awareness, and education. The program currently supports asthma control programs in 22 states and in the jurisdictions of Houston and Puerto Rico. Asthma death rates have decreased by 27%, and costs due to asthma illness and death have decreased by \$23.1 billion. Increased funding to this program of \$34 million will allow the CDC to continue this important work and allow additional funding for state grants.

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.

Please contact Sarah Goodwin at [sarah@nshhcoalition.org](mailto:sarah@nshhcoalition.org) if we can provide further information.

Sincerely,

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## National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition

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Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
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## National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition

---

The Honorable Betty McCollum  
Chair  
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment,  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David Joyce  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment,  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

May 1, 2020

Dear Chair McCollum and Ranking Member Joyce:

On behalf of the National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition, we would like to express our appreciation and thanks for the support lead poisoning prevention and healthy homes received in the Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations bill. In particular, we applaud the level funding for the radon program and the lead categorical grant program.

The current COVID-19 crisis has wreaked a heavy social and financial toll on the U.S. The significance of these programs 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 these programs and increase funding to a total of \$77 million. This includes \$34 million for EPA's Categorical Grants for lead and radon, \$16 million for the Lead Risk Reduction Program, \$4 million for the Indoor Air Radon Program, \$15 million for the Reduce Risk from Indoor Air Program, and \$8 million for the Children and Other Sensitive Populations Program.

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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](mailto:sarah@nshhcoalition.org) if we can provide further information.

Sincerely,

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Amanda Reddy  
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## National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition

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The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Chair  
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment,  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment,  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

May 1, 2020

Dear Chair Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

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Sincerely,

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Co-Chair  
National Safe and Healthy Housing  
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Issaquah, WA

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## 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](mailto:sarah@nshhcoalition.org) if we can provide further information.

Sincerely,

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## National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition

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The Honorable Susan Collins  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
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Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing  
and Urban Development and Related  
Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

May 1, 2020

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Sincerely,

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