



National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition

The Honorable Brian Schatz
Chair
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development, and Related
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

May 6, 2022

Dear Chair Schatz and Ranking Member Collins:

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 2022 appropriations bill. In particular, we applaud the increase from \$360 million to \$415 million for the Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the new funding for radon demonstration programs, the continued funding to address aging in place, and encourage coordination with the Department of Energy's Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP).

The devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have further demonstrated the connection between housing quality and health outcomes, how these impacts disproportionately affect specific populations including communities of color and low-income communities, and the necessity of investing in addressing healthy housing hazards and poor housing quality. As the country continues to invest in COVID-19 recovery, significant funding is still needed to increase housing affordability and stability, fix substandard housing, and provide innovative, flexible, and equitable services to those impacted by healthy housing hazards.

As you consider the Fiscal Year 2023 funding bill, we urge you to continue to support the vital work of this office and increase funding to a total of \$810 million, including \$500 million for HUD's Lead Paint program, \$300 million for the Healthy Homes Program, and \$10 million for the Lead Technical Studies Program.

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 three decades through programs that treat individual units for lead hazards, improve lead safety with enforcement actions and upgrade substandard

housing with healthy homes improvements. Despite progress, over three million homes with young children still have significant lead paint hazards. The nation must make even stronger investments to prevent more families from suffering needlessly. Recent increases in funding has allowed the office to provide new grants to state and local programs; the figures proposed by the National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition will build on that momentum. In addition, providing robust funding for the Healthy Homes Program is especially important and will reduce deferrals from weatherization and other programs, reach further into rural populations, and serve healthy homes issues separate from lead.

We also recommend that the income eligibility criteria for HUD's lead paint program be streamlined and made consistent with Medicare, weatherization, HOME, and other allied health and housing programs to reduce grantee administrative burdens. We also suggest that HUD reform their criteria for rating Technical Studies grant application to conform them with the office's other programs, to give greater weight to applicants who demonstrate early and robust engagement with marginalized populations (where it aligns with the research topic), and to include requirements for communicating findings to the community beyond peer-reviewed publication.

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 \$810 million in FY23, we can ensure that this critical initiative will continue protecting families from these preventable health hazards and yield positive societal benefits.

The National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition is a broad 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. 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,

Gillian Mittelstaedt
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National Safe and Healthy Housing
Coalition
Issaquah, WA

Amanda Reddy
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Columbia, MD

Organizational Signatures

National Organizations

Allergy & Asthma Network
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network
Clean Water Action
Earthjustice
Ecology Center
Elevate
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative
Lead and Environmental Hazards Association
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
National Center for Healthy Housing
National Network of Public Health Institutes
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium

Regional, State, and Local Organizations

Alameda County Healthy Homes Department
California Safe Schools
Children First
EnviroPlan, LLC
Healthy Housing Omaha
Learning Disabilities Association of Arkansas
Learning Disabilities Association of Connecticut
Learning Disabilities Association of Delaware
Learning Disabilities Association of Georgia
Learning Disabilities Association of Illinois
Learning Disabilities Association of Indiana
Learning Disabilities Association of Iowa
Learning Disabilities Association of Maine
Learning Disabilities Association of Minnesota
Learning Disabilities Association of New Jersey
Learning Disabilities Association of New York State
Learning Disabilities Association of Ohio
Learning Disabilities Association of South Carolina
Learning Disabilities Association of Texas
Learning Disabilities Association of Utah
Learning Disabilities Association of Virginia
Learning Disabilities Association of Wisconsin
Learning Disabilities Association of Alabama
Learning Disabilities Association of Michigan
Lincoln Westmoreland Housing, Inc.
Metropolitan Tenants Organization
Ohio Lead-Free Kids Coalition
Partnership for Air Matters

Rebuilding Together Sacramento
Regional Asthma Management and Prevention
Revitalize Community Development Corporation
Sullivan County, NH, Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes Program
Women for a Healthy Environment

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