

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

April 18, 2018

Dear Chair Collins and Ranking Member Reed:

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 in the Fiscal Year 2018 omnibus bill passed last month. In particular, we applaud the increase from \$145 million to \$230 million for the Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

As you consider the Fiscal Year 2019 funding bill, we urge you to continue to support the vital work of this office and further increase funding to a total of \$356 million, including \$250 million for HUD's Lead Paint program, \$100 million for the Healthy Homes Program and \$6 million for the Lead Technical Studies Program. This increase would allow the office to surpass the \$230 million recommended for lead activities alone in 2000 by the President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety to Children to help account for inflation.

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, forty percent 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 health hazards over the last two decades through programs that treat individual units for lead hazards, improve lead safety with enforcement action 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 are forced to suffer.

HUD Secretary Carson has noted the harmful effects of substandard housing and lead paint poisoning on health, illustrating that this is a bipartisan issue and one of significant concern. This is also a matter of economic common sense, because 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 \$356 million in FY 19, 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 300 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 has an obligation protect the most vulnerable of its citizens, its children, and the elderly, and that is what this funding does. These vital programs must continue to be fully 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.

Sincerely,

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