



April 23, 2018

Bill Cassidy, M.D.
SR520, Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Sponsorship of Bi-partisan Lead Safe Housing for Kids Act

Dear Senator Cassidy:

Thank you for your demonstrated commitment to representing the needs of Louisiana citizens in Congress. We write on behalf of Louisiana residents **to urge you to address lead-based paint hazards, the leading source of lead poisoning, in federally assisted housing by sponsoring the Lead Safe Housing for Kids Act of 2017 (S. 1845)**. The bill has strong bipartisan support and has been endorsed by over one hundred leading national and state-level advocacy groups, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, National Association of County and City Health Officials, National Housing Trust, and the National Center for Healthy Housing, among others.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention consistently cautions that no level of lead exposure is safe. Lead poisoning can leave children with irreversible, life-long brain damage, among other disabilities. Despite these facts, federal law does not require pre-rental lead hazard risk assessments in the Housing Choice Voucher program or project-based Section 8 housing receiving less than \$5000 in assistance. **Children in these federally assisted housing programs, paid for by our tax dollars, must develop lead poisoning before any meaningful lead hazard inspection is required.** All other federally assisted housing programs undergo some form of pre-rental lead hazard inspections. In 2016, HUD identified 57,000 federally assisted housing units with active lead hazards and an additional 450,000 units occupied by a child and built before 1978.

Housing vouchers are the largest source of housing aid statewide, funding nearly half of all units in Louisiana. **With over one in five houses in Louisiana built before 1960, the risk of exposing children to potential lead hazards in federally assisted housing is high.**

The Lead Safe Housing for Kids Act of 2017 will require lead hazard risk assessments and control in *all* federally assisted housing prior to occupancy by a child under the age of six (this does not include housing covered by federal mortgage insurance). This legislation represents the most critical immediate step we can take in protecting vulnerable infants and children in federally funded housing from the permanent disabilities associated with lead exposure. In fact, HUD Secretary Ben Carson has expressed support of preventing lead poisoning in all federally assisted housing. The Lead Safe Housing for Kids Act is an investment in Louisiana children and a critical step in improving the affordable housing stock and protecting tenants from lead hazards.

The following agencies and organizations support childhood lead poisoning prevention in Louisiana and endorse the Lead Safe Housing for Kids Act:



A Community Voice
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Louisiana
Boys Town Louisiana
Children's Advocacy Center
HousingNOLA
Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance
Louisiana Psychiatric Medical Association
Louisiana Public Health Institute
United Way of Southeast Louisiana

Together we urge your sponsorship of the Lead Safe Housing for Kids Act, a bill that will protect millions of children from lead poisoning by requiring lead hazard risk assessments before a child exposed to the lead hazard and develops permanent brain damage. Lead poisoning remains a major public health crisis nationwide, and the problem is especially acute in communities receiving federally assisted housing.

Thank you for your support of lead poisoning prevention. We look forward to working with you to end lead poisoning and ensure all children have the ability to reach their fullest potential.

Sincerely,

Andreanecia M. Morris

Executive Director, HousingNOLA
President/Chairwoman, Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance



April 23, 2018

The Honorable John Kennedy
SR383, Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Sponsorship of Bi-partisan Lead Safe Housing for Kids Act

Dear Senator Kennedy:

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