



Lead-Safe Housing for Kids Act of 2018 **Congressmen A. Donald McEachin (VA-04) and John Faso (NY-19)**

Since the enactment of federal lead policies in the 1990's, lead poisoning rates have fallen dramatically. However, lead poisoning risk continues to fall disproportionately on minority children who live in federally subsidized housing because of outdated and ineffective federal laws and regulations. Last year, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) finalized a rule that updated its policies, including aligning its definition of lead poisoning with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) definition of elevated blood lead level in children and establishing more comprehensive testing and evaluation procedures for housing occupied by children poisoned by lead. While HUD made much needed improvements to its regulatory schedule, the regulations continue to allow children to be exposed to and poisoned by lead before any intervention is triggered.

Under current HUD regulations, visual assessments are used to identify the presence of lead in a housing unit under the Housing Choice Voucher program and other housing programs. Research has shown, and HUD has recognized, the inadequacy of visual assessments in identifying lead-dust and lead-soil, the most significant source of lead exposure. Visual assessments are limited to identification of chipped and peeling paint, which can fail to identify lead hazards often found in intact painted surfaces such as window sashes and window sills—the most common source of lead-based paint in homes. In order to conclusively determine the presence of lead and to adequately protect children from lead poisoning, the policy must shift from identification and management to primary prevention.

There is no safe level of lead for children. Lead poisoning left undetected and unaddressed can cause irreversible and long-term health, neurological, and behavioral damage in children, resulting in significant costs to society. Children with lead poisoning often require ongoing medical treatment and special education services. This results in \$11-53 billion in additional healthcare costs, \$165-233 billion lost in lifetime earnings, \$25-35 billion in lost tax revenue, and \$30-146 million in special education expenses. However, lead poisoning prevention results in unparalleled cost savings for society because every dollar spent on lead hazard control yields a return of \$17 to \$221 in savings. Most importantly, lead poisoning prevention preserves a child's ability to reach his or her full potential.

The [Lead-Safe Housing for Kids Act of 2018](#) would ensure safe, affordable housing by reducing the threat of lead exposure and lead poisoning of children in federally-assisted housing by adopting primary prevention measures, including:

- prohibiting the use of visual assessments for low-income housing constructed prior to 1978 and require the use of risk assessments, a more accurate evaluation tool to identify lead hazards, before a family moves into the home;
- providing a process for families to relocate on an emergency basis, without penalty or the loss of assistance, if a lead hazard is identified in the home and the landlord fails to control the hazard within 30 days of being notified of the presence of lead; and
- requiring landlords to disclose the presence of lead if lead hazards are found in the home.

The [Lead-Safe Housing Act of 2018](#) is endorsed by the [Virginia Housing Alliance](#). This bill is the House companion to the [Lead-Safe Housing for Kids Act of 2017](#), which has been endorsed by: Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, Green & Healthy Homes Initiative, National Housing Law Project, Lead Lab, Inc., Environmental Defense Fund, Poverty & Race Research Action Council, United Parents Against Lead, National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership, National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, ChangeLab Solutions, Coalition on Human Needs, EarthJustice, Conservation Law Foundation, Western Center on Law & Poverty, National Association of HUD Tenants, Natural Resources Defense Council, and National Center for Healthy Housing.

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