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The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health, and Human Services  
2467 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health, and Human Services  
2413 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman  
U.S. Senate  
Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health, and Human Services  
267 Russell Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate  
Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health, and Human Services  
154 Russell Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

We join together as 66 Safe Kids coalitions from across the U.S. to strongly urge the Committee to oppose the elimination of funding for programs under the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) which seek to limit the risk posed to children when they are exposed to lead paint.

Over the past two years, we have learned a great deal about the dangers caused by lead, especially to small children and the elderly. Most recently, it has been a top-of-mind danger involving lead in the water supply because of failing infrastructure. The headlines have focused on the crisis in Flint, Michigan but many regional, county and city water systems have the same problem. There is also significant concern about lead in school water supplies throughout the nation.

Given public awareness about the dangers of lead, how can we think about ending a lead paint abatement program when we have known for years about the problem of lead paint in older housing units? The EPA has estimated that 38 million U.S. homes were painted with lead-based paint. This predominantly involves housing built before 1978, the year lead paint was banned for consumer use. When lead chips are consumed and dust is inhaled, children are put at serious risk. A 2014 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, looking at 34 states and the District of Columbia, reported that at least 243,000 kids had blood levels above the risk threshold. The American Academy of Pediatrics has stated that paint is a major pathway for children to inhale lead. Lead exposure can cause irreversible neurological damage and behavior disorders.

The societal costs of lead paint poisoning are astronomical, especially compared to the small investment in the EPA lead paint programs. The costs include strains on health care, treatment of attention-deficit-disorder, the need for special education, and much more. Further, the children in low-income, urban areas are disproportionately affected because they live in the older housing stock where lead paint was used and still exists. We understand that other federal programs also seek to resolve the lead paint poisoning risk, and we support those programs as well.

One of the reasons why this is so tragic is because it is preventable, and the programs slated for elimination at the EPA are among the solutions we need in place to protect our kids. The programs train workers on the safe removal of lead-based paint and provide public awareness about the problem—they make homes safer and create jobs. This is what the Safe Kids network of 418 coalitions around the nation, is all about: preventing injury which does not have to happen. Preventable injury is the number one cause of death of children in the U.S. We provide education and awareness for parents and caregivers, and advocate for evidence-based policy solutions. Dangers in the home such as lead paint and lead-contaminated water are within our mission.

In 1991, the Secretary of Health and Human Services under President George H. W. Bush stated that lead was the “number one environmental threat to the health of children in the United States.” This year, Professor Emily Benfer of the Loyola University of Chicago Law School, described the proposed program elimination well: “These actions are the equivalent of our government turning its back on our children and their futures.” We agree, and respectfully urge the Committees to turn its back on this proposed program elimination.

Sincerely,

Safe Kids Worldwide	Safe Kids Greater Cincinnati (OH)	Safe Kids Boston (MA)
Safe Kids Colorado	Safe Kids Inland Empire (CA)	Safe Kids Guilford County (NC)
Safe Kids Illinois	Safe Kids Los Angeles East (CA)	Safe Kids Union County (NC)
Safe Kids Indiana	Safe Kids Los Angeles West (CA)	Safe Kids Wilkes County (NC)
Safe Kids Kansas	Safe Kids San Diego (CA)	Safe Kids Middlesex County (NJ)
Safe Kids Massachusetts	Safe Kids San Mateo, Santa Clara (CA)	Safe Kids Passaic County (NJ)
Safe Kids California	Safe Kids Wausau (WI)	Safe Kids Wilkes County (NC)
Safe Kids Minnesota	Safe Kids Santa Barbara (CA)	Safe Kids NYC (NY)
Safe Kids New York State	Safe Kids Colorado Springs (CO)	Safe Kids Upstate New York
Safe Kids Ohio	Safe Kids Denver Metro (CO)	Safe Kids Fairfield County (OH)
Safe Kids Pennsylvania	Safe Kids Seminole County (FL)	Safe Kids Summit County (OH)
Safe Kids South Carolina	Safe Kids Suncoast (FL)	Safe Kids SE Pennsylvania
Safe Kids Virginia	Safe Kids Volusia, Flagler Counties (FL)	Safe Kids Allentown Bethlehem (PA)
Safe Kids Washington, DC	Safe Kids Savannah (GA)	Safe Kids Charleston Area (SC)
Safe Kids Wisconsin	Safe Kids Cherokee County (GA)	Safe Kids Anderson County (SC)
Safe Kids Alaska	Safe Kids Chicago (IL)	Safe Kids Upstate South Carolina
Safe Kids Central California	Safe Kids Bartholomew County (IN)	Safe Kids Midlands (SC)
Safe Kids Sonoma County (CA)	Safe Kids Shawnee County (KS)	Safe Kids Greater Dallas
Safe Kids Stanislaus (CA)	Safe Kids Prince George's County (MD)	Safe Kids El Paso (TX)
Safe Kids Sacramento County (CA)	Safe Kids Baltimore (MD)	Safe Kids Greater Houston (TX)
Safe Kids San Joaquin County (CA)	Safe Kids Kalamazoo (MI)	Safe Kids Pima County (AZ)
Safe Kids Orange County (CA)	Safe Kids West Michigan (MI)	Safe Kids Grand Forks (ND)