



NEWSNEWS***NEWS***NEWS***NEWS***NEWS***NEWS***

PA LEAD FREE PROMISE PROJECT ENDORSES SENATE BILL 522, URGES PASSING

Nearly 8,000 Pennsylvania children still lead paint poisoned every year

CONTACT: Kate Philips
philips@parkerphilips.com
215.850.4647 | mobile

HARRISBURG, PA (September 20, 2022) — The Lead-Free Promise Project, a coalition of nearly 60 organizations across the state all dedicated to ending lead paint poisoning in Pennsylvania, endorsed Senate Bill 522 — ‘Childhood Blood Lead Test Act’ — about the need to prioritize lead screening and remediation at a Capitol Rotunda press conference on Tuesday, September 20, 2022.

“Still today in 2022, 8,000 innocent young children are being poisoned by lead every year — and to make matters even worse only about 20% are screened,” said Jeffrey R. Martin, MD, Chair of the Department of Family and Community Medicine at Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health and Co-chair of the Lead-Free Promise Project. “But this bill, Senate Bill 522, would establish what Pennsylvania law is currently lacking, lead testing requirements that could save thousands of children from harm.

“This bill is a step in the right direction, and I urge our legislators to pass this for the sake of our youngest Pennsylvanians.”

Only 30% of Pennsylvania children under the age of two were screened for blood lead levels in 2018, and only 19% of children under the age of six have been tested. Effects of lead poisoning are irreversible and severe, including neurological and developmental disabilities,

and this bill would address this issue to ensure that all pregnant women and all children in Pennsylvania receive blood tests to detect lead poisoning.

Joining the Lead-Free Promise Project was Senator Lisa Baker, Sponsor of SB522, Representative Pam DeLissio, Minority Chair of the Children & Youth Committee, and Sean McCormack, Cumberland County District Attorney.

“Today, we are talking about something very basic — the safety of a family’s living environment. Childhood lead poisoning is an insidious threat that in too many cases goes unnoticed or unaddressed,” said Cumberland County District Attorney Sean McCormack. “My law enforcement colleagues view childhood lead poisoning as a significant public safety issue — the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association, the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association and the Pennsylvania Sheriffs’ Association have all endorsed the Lead-Free Promise Project, the sponsor of this event.

“Investing in childhood lead exposure testing, along with remediation of lead paint in older homes, will make our communities not only healthier, but also safer.”

Pennsylvania continues to lead the nation in lead exposure with having the second largest number of children testing positive for lead poisoning among all states. Still to this day, 8,000 Pennsylvania children are poisoned every year, and this is an entirely preventable condition that can rob children of their future by causing irreversible brain damage — and there are not nearly enough resources to help suffering families.

Senate Bill 522 unanimously passed out of the Senate in June and is currently in the House Children & Youth Committee with a vote expected tomorrow September 21st.

The Lead-Free Promise Project (LFPP) launched its over 55-organization coalition in 2021 vowing to remove lead paint-based hazards from homes and ensuring all children are screened for lead poisoning as part of a comprehensive wellness exam. Learn more at <https://paleadfree.org/>.

LFPP is part of ThrivingPa.com, a non-partisan, statewide campaign that seeks to improve the quality of and increase equitable access to a coordinated system of health supports, including access comprehensive perinatal health services, children’s health insurance, nutrition supports and lead screening and abatement.

###