

SENATE FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND MEDICAID

Chairman Hackett

Vice Chair Tavares

May 24, 2017

Katie Smock

Member, Ohio Healthy Homes Network

Written Testimony

Chairman Hackett, Vice Chair Tavares, and members I appreciate your time in hearing my testimony. I am Katie Smock and I reside in Lancaster, Ohio.

Preemption of Local Lead Laws

I am opposed to the language in Substitute House Bill 49 that would preempt local lead-based paint laws.

If Ohio and the city of Lancaster had laws to mandate that a home is inspected and remediated of lead paint in the process of purchasing, my daughter would not be poisoned by this toxin.

How lead has contaminated Leila

My daughter was 6 months old when my husband, Mark, and I purchased a beautiful old home near downtown Lancaster. It needed work, but we were excited with its potential.

We started by removing carpet and restoring the solid oak woodwork back to its original glory.

In August 2016, my daughter Leila, had a well visit. Her doctor ordered a blood test. Little did I know that this blood test change everything. Her blood lead level was 34 µg/dL. The doctor ordered another test to ensure the result was accurate. This time, it was 31 µg/dL.

This has wreaked havoc on our family. We have little idea how this is affecting Leila. She is now 3. Mark and I constantly question Leila's behavior because we wonder if it is from the lead or behavior of a 3 year old.

She gets a blood test every month. This is something I never thought Leila would ever have to endure.

Medicaid Funding for Remediation

I wholeheartedly support the use of Medicaid funding for the use of lead remediation. Our home has an active lead order against it. We would be eligible for the funding and this is our only hope to save our home. We do not have \$20,000-\$30,000 to remediate the lead on our own. As Mark and I are both are Operation Enduring Freedom veterans, we have searched for aid through veterans and civilian resources only to come up empty.

At this time, we are struggling to hold on to our home. We are behind on the majority of our bills and are struggling to pay the mortgage. This has contributed to a huge strain in our marriage.

We were loaned a HEPA vacuum but unfortunately no amount of cleaning will permanently remove the poison from our home.

Lead Study Group

Ohio Healthy Homes Network is working with Senator Lehner on an amendment to establish a study group on Ohio's Lead Law. The objective is to recommend ways to protect children from lead poisoning that Leila didn't have. The group would be a wonderful place to work out state versus local lead laws.

It is very important that our state lead law does more to protect children from being poisoned. The current law forces homeowners to remediate AFTER a child is poisoned, not before the child is poisoned or even moves into the home.

I ask you as a parent to remove the preemption language. Please protect our children and add the Lead Study Group to the budget. Please do this for our children. Please help Ohio families.

Little children like Leila deserve our protection because they cannot protect themselves. They do not have power to change our laws. I ask you to make the much-needed changes because our children deserve much better.