

## SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chairman Oelslager

Vice Chair Manning

June 6, 2017

Shecara Norris

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Manning, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am Shecara Norris and I live in Columbus, Ohio. I'm married and have six children.

I am here today to oppose preemption of local lead laws. I believe we need a rental inspection law in Columbus to protect children from what happened to my son.

### Michael's story

Michael was born a healthy baby in 2013. In 2015, my husband and I and six children moved into a rental home with lead. Michael was poisoned at 2 years old. When tested, Michael's blood lead level was at 30, an extremely high level.

When Michael came home from the hospital, he had terrible temper tantrums, screaming for no reason, grabbing his head. He was uncontrollable. For the next several months, Michael had to get venous tests two to three times per week to check his lead levels, a very traumatic experience. And Michael wasn't the only one with a lead level. My other 5 children tested between 5 and 9.

The property that poisoned Michael was in the Columbus Housing Authority's rent voucher program and had passed the paint inspection. However, the owner had painted without first removing the peeling paint. This caused the new paint to come off all over the house, creating lead

hazards. We couldn't leave right away because we couldn't find a place for our large family. We finally went to a shelter to get Michael out of the house.

Most the rentals without lead in Columbus cost \$1,000-\$2,000 per month, much more than the \$650 - \$800/month we could afford. Some apartment buildings without lead had lot of gun violence and gangs selling drugs.

We moved to a small two-bedroom with no lead on the inside but a lot on the outside. The children couldn't play outside.

So we moved to a third home. This one was also positive for lead. The Lead Safe Columbus grant program agreed to fix the home but it was a six-month wait. During that time, we had to send Michael to live with his godmother.

We are a Christian family. Our prayers that Michael would be healed have been answered. So far there has been no effect on his learning ability. Once our current home was made lead safe, his lead levels went down, but are still above 10.

As a mother watching my baby suffer, then send him away and not being able to be by his side, hurt me to my core. Nobody should have to go through this, especially a child. I pray that you reject preemption and refer the issue of state versus local lead laws to the Lead Study Group.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions.