



MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

A.6399-C/S.6350-B

An Act to amend the public health law in relation to the “childhood lead poisoning primary prevention and safe housing act.”

Reasons for Support

The Center for Working Families believes that New York state government can and must do more to prevent childhood lead poisoning.

The source of the lead that poisons the overwhelming number of affected children is no mystery: deteriorating paint, in older, poorly maintained housing. The victims of childhood lead poisoning are mostly poor, mostly minority children. Recent scientific studies show that children are irreversibly injured at much lower levels of exposure than previously believed.

The cornerstone of this legislation is the requirement that the state Department of Health design a statewide childhood lead poisoning primary prevention plan and work with local officials in the top 30 impacted communities outside of New York City to implement local prevention plans that target the sources of lead poisonings.

The state will focus its efforts and resources on communities with the highest concentrations of identified housing with lead-paint hazards, children with elevated blood lead levels, and low-income and minority residents.

To minimize the chance of property abandonment as a result of this new requirement, the bill also provides rental property owners with tax credits and low-cost loans to remove, contain or stabilize lead paint to prevent poisonings.

The legislation also requires the state to take over a worker training and certification program current run by US EPA to ensure an ample supply of qualified inspectors, risk assessors and lead hazard abatement workers and that property owners are trained in lead safe work practices. This legislation will make New York State eligible for the first time for millions of dollars in federal grant monies and will create local jobs in this area.

The Center for Working Families urges Governor Paterson to sign into law the Childhood Lead Poisoning Primary Prevention and Safe Housing Act.

For further information please contact Dave Palmer, Campaigns Director, (718) 222-3796 x 244; dpalmer@workingfamilies.org.