



Terryl Brown Clemons, Esq
Acting Counsel
Executive Chamber, Second Floor
New York State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

October 9, 2008

Dear Ms. Clemons:

We urge the Governor to approve the Gantt-Robach (A.6399-C/S.6350-B) *Childhood Lead Poisoning Primary Prevention and Safe Housing Act*. This legislation will move New York to prevent, not respond to, lead poisoning.

Each year some 5,000 of New York's children are identified as lead poisoned, about half outside New York City. Many more cases remain undetected since not all children are screened as required by law. Current law requires local health departments to look for lead sources only *after a child is identified as lead poisoned through a blood test*.

This legislation will require the state to develop prevention plans for the top 30 lead "hot spots", identify lead sources and require elimination of lead hazards **before** children are poisoned. The bill would also improve lead screening and reporting and provide modest tax credits to help low income property owners eliminate lead hazards. During tough budget times, the bill **will not add financial burdens to local governments and will allow the state to access federal HUD grants for the first time, to offset implementation costs while reducing health care, special education, juvenile and criminal justice costs.**

Since New York began regularly testing young children in the early 1990s, over 200,000 children have been identified as lead poisoned. The vast majority of lead poisoned children not in New York City live in "pockets" in Buffalo, Rochester, Albany, Amsterdam, Schenectady, Newburgh, Yonkers, Syracuse, and Utica. Overwhelmingly these children are poor and African American or Latino.

The Childhood Lead Poisoning Primary Prevention and Safe Housing Act **uses Department of Health data mapping and builds upon current pilot programs.** This legislation's implementation will prevent tens of thousands of New York's most vulnerable children from life-long damage caused by lead poisoning.

We need not inspect all New York housing. We know how to cost-effectively identify and control lead hazards. But we must act decisively to preserve our State's most precious, yet vulnerable, assets — the children of New York State. **We urge the Governor to sign Gantt-Robach (A.6399-C/S.6350-B) – *the Childhood Lead Poisoning Primary Prevention & Safe Housing Act* – into law.**

Sincerely,

Kathleen A. Curtis