

ADVOCATES



FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

To: Chair Kaiser and members of the Ways and Means Committee
From: Jamesha Caldwell, Education Policy Legislative Intern
Re: House Bill 563: Income Tax - Lead Remediation Credit
Date: February 12, 2020
Position: Support

Children with elevated levels of lead exposure are at a far greater risk of experiencing detrimental health conditions and disabilities related to brain damage, developmental delays, learning and memory difficulties, mood disorders, and an abundance of other conditions and symptoms.¹ Due to the wide range of effects of lead exposure, **the smallest amount of lead exposure can negatively impact the educational outcomes and life circumstances of children.**

Black children in particular, who are disproportionately affected by lead exposure can face adverse educational outcomes as a result of health and behavioral symptoms related to **hyperactivity, mood irregularities, and learning challenges.** Through this, adverse educational outcomes can result in the enactment of penalties and criminalization of behaviors via school suspension as well as learning and social seclusion through the removal of a student from the classroom and many other harmful and disruptive tactics.

As of 2017, Maryland has had a substantial increase in the administration of lead testing in children between the ages of 0-18. As a result, researchers have found (1) a decline in blood lead levels and (2) evidence that **reduction in lead poisoning overall must be driven by the implementation and enforcement of lead accountability, reduction, and prevention laws.**² However, these gains are not seen equitably across the state—it is important to continuously evaluate the work being done and hold state agencies accountable for implementing these policies with fidelity.

House Bill 563 takes a substantial step in establishing and maintaining a pivotal safeguard for tenants with children who rent properties and may be exposed to lead. HB 563 would not only continue to maintain Maryland's efforts to become a state in which no one is poisoned by lead, but it would also ensure that property owners are included and incentivized in these lead poisoning reduction and prevention efforts. For the reasons above, **ACY strongly urges a favorable report on this bill.**

¹ Lead toxicity: What are the physiological effects of lead exposure? Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/csem/csem.asp?csem=7&po=10>.

² Maryland Childhood Blood Lead Surveillance, 2017

Advocates for Children and Youth builds a strong Maryland by advancing policies and programs to ensure children of every race, ethnicity, and place of birth can achieve their full potential.