



NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION

March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016

The Honorable Gary Peters  
United States Senate  
724 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senate  
731 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Peters and Stabenow,

On behalf of the National Head Start Association, I write in support of the Children's Head Start Intervention for Life and Development (CHILD) Act. Your legislation will assist the Department of Health and Human Services in addressing the needs of children and families impacted by toxic pollutants by establishing one time 5-year Head Start grants to proven providers in impacted communities.

The water and lead poisoning crisis in Flint, Michigan is truly a crisis and of national concern. Not only are there an estimated 8,000 children under six in Flint who have been exposed to lead, but currently only 1,177 of them have access Head Start and Early Head Start. All of these children are at risk of developmental issues; lower IQs; and decreased motor, reading, and math skills. Without adequate screening and treatment, like that conducted and coordinated by Head Start programs, the impacts of lead poisoning will be felt by this community for decades.

Through its comprehensive approach to providing our nation's most vulnerable children and their families an opportunity to succeed in school and life, Head Start is uniquely positioned to respond to a crisis such as that in Flint. Lead screening, connecting children and families to health professionals, and coordinating delivery of such services are all services that children and families in Head Start across the nation must receive. Head Start programs operate as community hubs and connectors by linking families, services, and programs together in a routine, navigable, and efficient manner – and making Head Start the perfect crisis responder and leader.

We commend you for crafting this legislation in consultation with Head Start providers and in such a way that will enable our nation's most vulnerable children and families to receive appropriate and adequate services. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues in Congress to move this authority forward and to identifying funding to support children and families in emergency situations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Yasmina Vinci". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Yasmina Vinci  
Executive Director