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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND THE WORKFORCE

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
2176 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6100

February 4, 2016

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The Honorable John Kline
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6100

Dear Chairman Kline:

Under your leadership last session, our Committee came together to pass the Every Student Succeeds Act in an effort to, as you rightfully said, "help every child in every school receive a quality education." In that spirit, I respectfully request that you schedule a hearing to examine how the children of Flint, Michigan can receive quality education in the face of massive lead poisoning due to decisions made about the city's water supply.

Studies confirm that there is a link between lead exposure and reduced neurodevelopment and learning capacity. Most recently, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) released a report in April 2015 that pointed to lead exposure's impact on the "cognitive, language, memory, learning, sensory, and neuromotor abilities"¹ as well as the role it may play on the attention span of children and "visual-spatial skills, social behavior, speech and language, and fine and gross motor skills."² Their research further indicates that "lead exposure beyond two years of age may be even more strongly associated with cognitive development."³

Children are entitled to equal educational opportunity, dating back to *Brown v. Board of Education*, when the Supreme Court found that, "it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if ... denied the opportunity of an education" and that education is "a right which must be made available to all on equal terms."⁴ Our Committee is uniquely situated to address policy opportunities to provide this equal opportunity to those who have been adversely impacted by lead poisoning. The opportunity for a strong start to a successful life will be stunted for Flint's children if they are not given the resources, including early interventions

¹ Centers for Disease Control, *Education Interventions for Children Affected by Lead*, April 2015, available at http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/publications/Educational_Interventions_Children_Affected_by_Lead.pdf.

² *Ibid*

³ *Ibid*

⁴ *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

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and access to high-quality early learning programs, such as Head Start, to help them overcome the negative effects of exposure to lead.

Given our Committee's jurisdiction on education and educational enrichment programs that are responsible for closing the achievement gap in public education, I request that the Committee hold a hearing to explore how key programs can be robustly supported and expanded to ameliorate the harm caused the tragedy in Flint. The programs that could be useful in responding to the needs of the children of Flint include: Head Start, Early Head Start, the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), preschool programs, child nutrition, home visiting, health screenings, Title I funding from ESEA, and juvenile justice programs – all initiatives and programs that fall under our Committee's jurisdiction.

Committee Democrats would like to address this urgent matter and a Full Committee hearing should be the first step.

Sincerely,



ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT
Ranking Member