

February 9, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230 US Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 US Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leaders McConnell and Reid:

As organizations representing advocates for America's children and families, we write in support of the children of Flint, Michigan, as they grapple with urgent infrastructure and health needs concerning their water contamination situation.

We know that members of both political parties in the Senate are affronted by whatever circumstances led to these conditions confronting the citizens of Flint.

We are also mindful of the great history of our nation to respond to both man-made and natural disasters: Murrah Federal Building bombing, Hurricane Katrina, ice-storms in Atlanta, and tornadoes in the mid-west from Oklahoma, to Joplin, to Ohio. Now, the water contamination emergency in Flint demands our immediate attention and response.

These children and families have waited almost two years for recognition of their deteriorating infrastructure and health conditions. Now that this tragedy is exposed, we ask you to act promptly to provide monetary and consulting assistance to improve Flint's water system to acceptable standards. It is also important to act quickly to address the medical, developmental, and educational consequences of lead-contaminated water. The developing bodies and brains of children cannot wait. Their physical development and psychological recovery must begin now and will need response for some time into the future.

We applaud the amendment by Senators Stabenow and Peters to provide immediate infrastructure funding relief and to examine through further study the long-term impacts of lead exposure, so that future consequences of this tragedy are appropriately and accurately addressed for these citizens and for all of America's communities that may become victims of similar circumstances. The urgency of this situation requires that there be no delay caused by arguments over offsets; nor should other human needs programs that assist our nation's children and families be cut to pay for addressing this crisis.

We strongly urge you to provide emergency funding now to address this crisis. Please forge an agreement now on behalf of children and vulnerable families who are unable to advocate for basic needs such as clean water.

Thank you for your leadership on behalf of these children and families.

Sincerely,

9to5

AFL-CIO

Alliance for Strong Families and Communities

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
(AFSCME)

California Black Health Network

Center for Law and Social Policy

Child Welfare League of America

Children's Advocacy Institute

Children's Defense Fund

Children's Leadership Council

Citizen's Committee for Children

Every Child Matters Education Fund

First Focus Campaign for Children

Florida Chapter of Am. Academy of Pediatrics

Foster Family-based Treatment Association

Juvenile Law Center

Kempe Center (Aurora, CO)

National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds

National Association for Bilingual Education

National Association of Counsel for Children

National Association of School Nurses

National Association of Social Workers

National Association of Working Women

National Center on Adoption and Permanency

National Council for Behavioral Health

National Foster Parent Association

National Hispanic Medical Association

National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

New Mexico Voices for Children

Nurse-Family Partnership/National Service

School-Based Health Alliance

Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas' Institute Justice Team

USAction

ZERO TO THREE

CC. Sen. Lisa Murkowski
Sen. Maria Cantwell
Sen. Jim Inhofe
Sen. Barbara Boxer