



**National Center for
Healthy Housing**

ALLIANCE FOR HEALTHY HOMES
Working for Affordable Healthy Housing for All



For Immediate Release

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Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) Introduces Nation's First Comprehensive Healthy Housing Bill

October 2, 2008—Washington, DC. The National Center for Healthy Housing (NCHH) and the Alliance for Healthy Homes praised the introduction this week of new legislation geared toward improving the quality of housing in the United States.

Senate bill S. 3654, introduced by Senator Jack Reed (D-RI), emphasizes cost-effective approaches and market-based incentives to make homes healthier and safer without detracting from their affordability. Entitled the Research, Hazard Intervention, and National Outreach for Healthier Housing Act, the multi-faceted legislation aims to improve research, enhance the capacity of federal programs, and expand national outreach efforts.

Bill provisions include:

- Provides funding for existing federal housing programs, such as CDBG, HOME, and LIHEAP to add healthy homes components to their programs.
- Leverages the private market interest in healthy homes by creating a voluntary “Healthy Homes Seal of Approval” modeled after the successful Energy Star program.
- Authorizes \$7,000,000 for each of the next five years for the National Institute of Environmental Health Science and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to evaluate the health risks and human health effects of indoor exposure to chemical pollutants including carbon monoxide, chemical asthma triggers, and common household and garden pesticides.
- Authorizes \$6,000,000 for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to study methods for the assessment and control of housing-related health hazards.
- Provides \$10,000,000 for HUD and CDC to study the indoor environmental quality of existing housing and to create a system for monitoring housing related hazards.

“The places people live undoubtedly impact their health and well-being. Residents of housing that is poorly designed, constructed, or maintained are at risk for cancer, injuries, childhood lead poisoning, and asthma. With more than 100 million existing homes in the U.S., it is important that we direct attention and resources to maintaining this important infrastructure in a manner that supports the health of families,” said Rebecca Morley, executive director of the National Center for Healthy Housing.

Approximately 6,000,000 households live with moderate or severe housing problems, including heating, plumbing, and electrical problems. And even though lead-based paint was banned in 1978, 24 million households still face significant lead-based paint hazards. Providing healthier housing in the United States will help prevent an estimated 240,000 elevated blood lead levels, 18,000 unintentional injury deaths, and 2,000,000 emergency room visits for asthma.

“Senator Reed’s legislation provides a long awaited roadmap for creating healthier homes across the country,” said Alliance for Healthy Homes Executive Director, Patrick MacRoy. “By providing key funding for capacity building and helping to break down bureaucratic barriers at the Federal level, this legislation will help ensure that our children and our families are safe in their homes.”

In March 2008, Senators Reed (D-RI) and Hagel (R-NE) introduced legislation creating the first Council on Healthy Housing, which would bring together Federal, State, and local government representatives, as well as industry and non-profit representatives to address the issue of healthy homes.

For the complete bill text and additional background information visit:

http://www.nchh.org/html/healthy_housing_bill.htm or www.afhh.org

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The National Center for Healthy Housing (NCHH) is the only national scientific and technical non-profit organization dedicated to creating healthy and safe homes for America's children through practical and proven steps. NCHH develops scientifically valid and practical strategies to make homes safe from hazards, to alert low-income families about housing-related health risks, and to help them protect their children. NCHH also works with governmental and non-governmental organizations to develop standards and programs and guide their implementation through insurers, lenders, federal and state laws and regulations, community organizations, and the courts.

The Alliance for Healthy Homes is the national, nonprofit public interest organization advocating for practical, affordable policy solutions and working to build community capacity to prevent housing-related hazards from harming the health of children, their families, and other residents. The Alliance stresses the importance of fixing housing-related health hazards before they cause harm; housing that is decent, environmentally safe, and affordable for all; and holistic strategies that efficiently address multiple hazards and their underlying causes. The Alliance works closely with policy makers, community-based organizations, housing providers, government agencies, and other stakeholders. The Alliance provides strategic and technical support to community-based organizations and state and local agencies across the nation.