

# Democrat and Chronicle

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*"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."*

*First Amendment to the United States Constitution*

A GANNETT NEWSPAPER · FOUNDED IN 1833

## Editorials

# Lead progress

■ As city moves ahead, landlords must join fight to prevent poisoning.

At long last, the city is moving forward on legislation to protect vulnerable children from lead poisoning. A meeting last Thursday, at which City Council members laid out a schedule for public participation and legal and environmental review, was promising.

Starting in February, the public will have a chance to have its say. It's important that landlords and city officials approach this period in the spirit of cooperation.

Landlords are already starting to come forward with concerns that they will be faced with costly lead abatement repairs that they can't afford. Rather than trying to block legislation that is necessary to save children, they must work with government to find a way to get lead hazards repaired.

Currently there are two sets of lead legislation in front of city council, one introduced by Mayor Bill Johnson and one by Councilman Tim Mains.

Both would declare peeling paint in houses built before 1978 a safety hazard and demand stricter upkeep

of those properties.

That's necessary and long overdue. Young children who ingest lead paint chips suffer irreparable brain damage. It's shameful that more than 1,000 children test positive for lead poisoning in Monroe County each year.

No one disputes that keeping homes free from lead hazards, especially in older poorer areas where most lead poisoning occurs, will be expensive. Landlords are

### Our health: Lead poisoning

mistaken in thinking that they will have to bear the burden alone.

The federal government has already allocated millions in federal grants to make local homes lead-safe. A county-administered federal HUD program, for example, has already trained 572 people in lead-safe work practices for free. A federal grant program has helped landlords and owner occupants make 144 housing units lead-safe so far.

Making the application process for these kinds of grants as smooth as possible is one way to get even more landlords involved.

If landlords and the government take a cooperative approach, Rochester will be able to end lead poisoning.

For more information about lead hazard reduction programs call (585) 274-8026. □