

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 17, 2018

Dr. Mark T. Esper  
Secretary of the Army  
101 Army Pentagon  
Washington, D.C.  
20310-0101

Dear Secretary Esper,

We write to you today concerned about recent reports of lead poisoning at a number of Army installations. The health and safety of our servicemembers and their families are of the utmost importance.

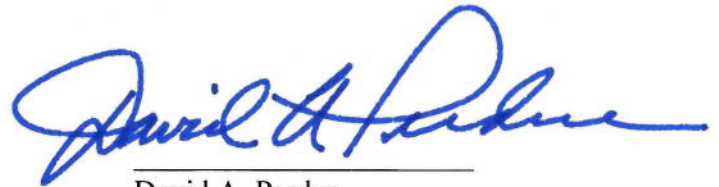
A recent Reuters report highlighted cases of lead poisoning at on-base housing at Fort Benning, Georgia; Fort Polk, Louisiana; Fort Hood and Fort Bliss, Texas; and Fort Knox, Kentucky. This follows a 2015 DoD Inspector General report that found significant lead paint hazards at Ft. Belvoir in Virginia. At Fort Benning, Reuters conducted tests at five homes using methodology designed with a Columbia University geochemist. All five homes contained hazardous levels of deteriorating lead paint with one home far exceeding the federal threshold. Fort Knox contained levels 100 times the federal threshold. According to Reuters, records from Brooks Army Medical Center in Texas show that from 2011 to 2016 more than 1,050 small children on bases nationwide tested positive for traces of lead higher than the Centers of Disease Control's elevated threshold. The report also raises concerns that the Army has discouraged certified testing to identify deteriorating lead paint in base homes and that base hospitals have not properly reported incidents of children with high lead tests to state health departments.

As the report points out, these on-base homes, managed and operated largely through private partnerships, are putting families and children at risk. We ask that you provide our offices with a detailed briefing as soon as possible outlining the immediate and long-term mitigation strategy to keep military families safe, provide medical treatment for those potentially or previously affected, make long-lasting repairs and finally, provide legislative proposals or guidance on legislation needed to hold contractors accountable.

Sincerely,



Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



David A. Perdue  
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



Johnny Isakson  
United States Senator