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FLOOR DEBATE

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addressing. Children can still be in the home and can still be exposed to lead-based paint. And so the Douglas County Health Department and the city of Omaha have applied for a federal grant, and that federal grant money has been allowing them to deal with remediation of the lead-based paint contamination that no other funding sources are available to deal with. That grant money has been exhausted, as I understand it. They have reapplied for another grant to continue dealing with the remediation and the abatement of the lead paint hazard. But currently we have a number of children in the affected area who are still living in old housing stock because that's all they can afford to live in, and those children are exposed to chipping paint on window sills and, in some cases, walls. So, the current exposure of those children to these lead hazards is what Senator Chambers rightfully wants us to address and to put money into to prevent this immediate danger to these children. And when children are exposed to lead, it creates brain damage and nervous system damage that in most instances is irrevocable. And because of that, it's an immediate problem. It's recognized as an immediate problem by the EPA, and we need to get additional funding to address it. The current remediation is no longer able to continue until the next grant funds come in. So this is a kind of stop-gap effort, just like we did with the LUST trust fund. When we had problems with it, we tried to not allow the contamination cleanup from stopping. We tried to keep it going. This is an attempt, and I support what Senator Chambers is trying to do, in this regard, in keeping these children from being exposed to lead poisoning. We continue to try to get more parents to bring their children in for screening, particularly those children under the age of six who are most vulnerable. And we are over halfway, having over half of the children in the area tested. And getting early testing, early detection, we can reduce further exposure. We can also prevent this damage that in some case is going to scar these children for life and is also going to contribute to the cost of education because some of these children are going to need remedial...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR PREISTER: ...education. They are going to need other