



August 12, 2008

## State Legislature finally passes lead bill

It shouldn't have taken as long as it did, but it's positive that both houses of the state Legislature have adopted a lead-paint remediation law that could help afflicted cities such as Rochester cope with this serious public-health problem.

Combined with Rochester's and Monroe County's own initiatives on this issue, the state statute will bring research and resource to bear and will help landlords pay for required cleanups.

Local efforts over the past several years have helped to reduce the number of children affected by exposure to lead paint.

But it's still a serious problem — more than 3,000 upstate children younger than 6 years old had elevated lead levels in 2005.

Learning disabilities are often a result, as are other manifestations of brain damage.

The bill was held up in June for reasons that show how difficult it is to pass two-house bills in an election year.

The Assembly bill, sponsored by Rochester Democrat David Gantt, was only minutely different from one sponsored by Republican Joe Robach that passed the Senate.

Yet that turned into a ridiculous political skirmish that Robach, to his credit, called off last week, freeing the Senate to adopt the Gantt version and get the bill to Gov. Paterson for his signature.

This is legislation that serves the public health and saves children in the bargain.

This is a scourge that must be eliminated. Politics has no place in this issue.

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