



# **LINCOLN CHAFEE**

## **U.S. SENATOR**

### **RHODE ISLAND**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **CHAFEE ANNOUNCES GRANT FOR RESEARCH ON THE LONG TERM EFFECTS OF LEAD EXPOSURE IN YOUNG CHILDREN**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee announced today that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has notified him that the University of Rhode Island will receive a \$144,000 grant from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. The money will be used to research the long-term effects childhood exposure to lead may have on the brain during the aging process.

“The lead exposure problem is a critical issue in many areas across the country, and remains an urgent problem in Rhode Island,” Senator Chafee said. “I am pleased that this money is being made available to fund research aimed at learning more about the effects of lead on humans and human development.” he continued.

The program’s goals are to determine whether fetal exposure to lead increases the risk of neurodegeneration in the elderly. Neurodegeneration in the elderly primarily leads to diseases such as Parkinson’s Disease and Alzheimer’s. Studies have been conducted in rodents which have determined that exposure to lead in early stages of development can contribute to the neurodegeneration of the brain during the aging process. The study by the University of Rhode Island signifies the first to show preliminary evidence that exposure to lead may contribute to degenerative diseases, and represents a new model for determining environmental risk factors to an individual’s health.

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