

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 18, 2015

The President  
The White House  
Washington DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to request that you prioritize the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) by providing no less than \$4.7 billion for the program in your Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 budget proposal.

LIHEAP provides vital assistance to low income households, seniors, and veterans in both the cold winter and hot summer months by helping with their energy bills. According to the National Energy Assistance Director's Association, more than 90 percent of LIHEAP recipients have at least one household member who is a child, elderly, or disabled, and 20 percent of households include at least one veteran. This funding continues to be a lifeline for some of our most vulnerable citizens. Moreover, as some parts of our country continue to face rising energy costs, LIHEAP helps to ensure that people do not have to choose between paying their energy bills and paying for food or medicine.

We are deeply concerned that the number of households eligible for LIHEAP assistance continues to exceed available funding while the average cost of home heating is expected to remain unaffordable for millions of households nationwide. In fact, the current funding level is able to serve just 20 percent of the eligible population, and those who receive LIHEAP assistance have seen their average grant reduced by \$107 since 2010 from \$520 to \$413.

Additionally, the purchasing power of LIHEAP has declined in recent years. The average LIHEAP grant has fallen from 60 percent in 2010 to nearly 47 percent of the cost of home heating. For households using delivered fuels, this decline is even more dramatic, covering just 18 percent of heating oil and propane costs. With the average LIHEAP grant estimated to cover less than half of the average home heating costs for a household this winter, many low income families and seniors will struggle to pay for the basic necessity of home energy and will have fewer resources available to meet other essential needs.

As you finalize your FY 2017 budget request, we ask that you take into account the high demand for LIHEAP assistance and restore funding to this program to a level no less than \$4.7 billion.

Thank you for your time and attention to consider this important request.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed  
United States Senator



Susan Collins  
United States Senator

cc: Shaun Donovan, Director, Office of Management and Budget  
Silvia Mathews Burwell, Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

*Maria Cantwell*

Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator

*Edward J. Markey*

Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

*Patty Murray*

Patty Murray  
United States Senator

*Lisa Murkowski*

Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator

*Patrick J. Leahy*

Patrick J. Leahy  
United States Senator

*Kelly A. Ayotte*

Kelly Ayotte  
United States Senator

*Sherrod Brown*

Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

*Chris Coons*

Chris Coons  
United States Senator

*Ron Wyden*

Ron Wyden  
United States Senator

*Bernard Sanders*

Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator

*Bob Casey, Jr.*

Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator

*Tim Kaine*

Tim Kaine  
United States Senator

*Mark R. Warner*

Mark Warner  
United States Senator

*Kirsten Gillibrand*

Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

*Cory Booker*

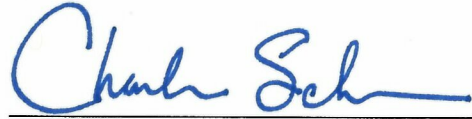
Cory Booker  
United States Senator

*Michael F. Bennet*

Michael Bennet  
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



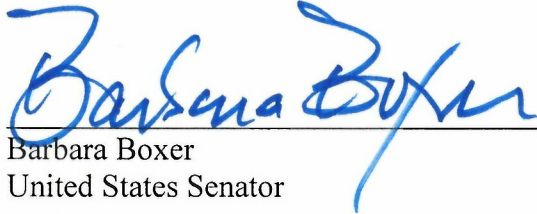
Charles Schumer  
United States Senator



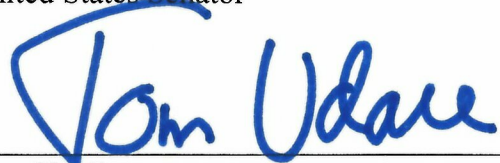
Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator




Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator



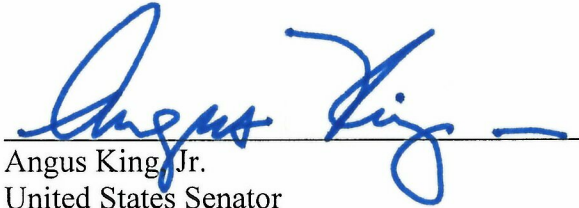
Tom Udall  
United States Senator



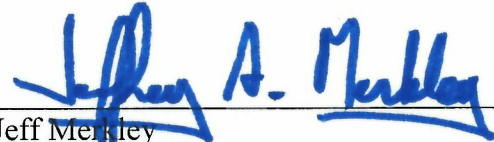
Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



Angus King, Jr.  
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley  
United States Senator



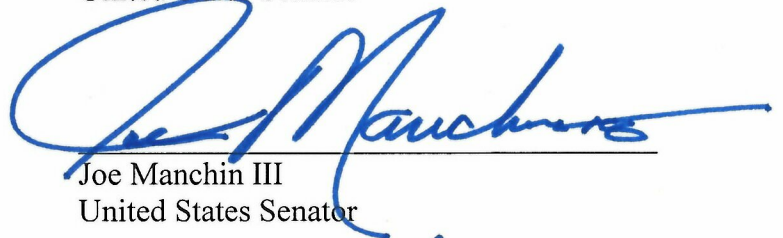
Al Franken  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



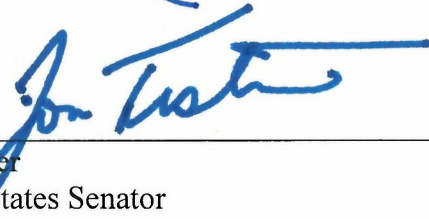
Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



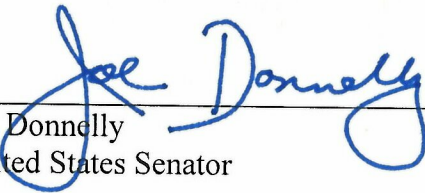
Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator



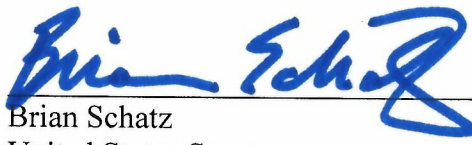
Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator

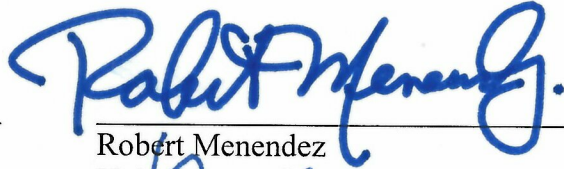


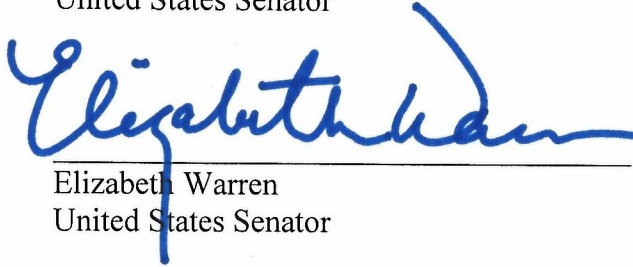
Jon Tester  
United States Senator

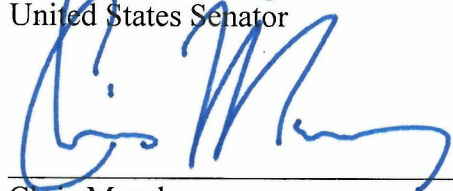
  
Joe Donnelly  
United States Senator

  
Gary Peters  
United States Senator

  
Brian Schatz  
United States Senator

  
Robert Menendez  
United States Senator

  
Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

  
Chris Murphy  
United States Senator