

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 19, 2014

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We are writing to request that you prioritize the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) in your Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 budget proposal by including no less than \$4.7 billion for this program that provides critical support to our most vulnerable citizens.

LIHEAP is the main federal program that helps low-income households and seniors with their energy bills, providing vital assistance during both the cold winter and hot summer months. LIHEAP households are among the most vulnerable in the country. 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. For these households, LIHEAP funding has been a lifeline during challenging economic times. Access to affordable home energy is not a luxury. It is a matter of health and safety.

We understand the ongoing discretionary budget challenges. However, 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 nearly \$100 since 2010, from \$520 in FY 2010 to \$424 in FY 2014.

Additionally, the purchasing power of LIHEAP has declined in recent years. Since FY 2010, the average LIHEAP grant has fallen from about 60 percent to 44 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 2016 budget request, we ask that you take into account the high demand for LIHEAP assistance. We urge you to reprioritize this program within your FY 2016 budget and restore funding to this program to a level no less than \$4.7 billion.

Thank you for your attention to and consideration of 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



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



Kelly Ayotte  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



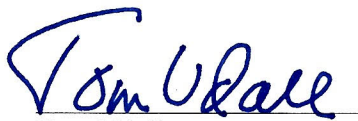
Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator




Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator




Tom Udall  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley  
United States Senator



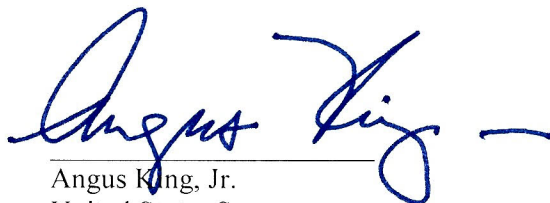
Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Mazie Hirono  
United States Senator



Angus King, Jr.  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



Al Franken  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

Carl Levin  
United States Senator

Mark Pryor  
United States Senator

Mark Begich  
United States Senator

Kay Hagan  
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator

John Walsh  
United States Senator

Mary Landrieu  
United States Senator

John D. Rockefeller IV  
United States Senator

Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator

Patrick J. Leahy  
United States Senator

Tim Johnson  
United States Senator

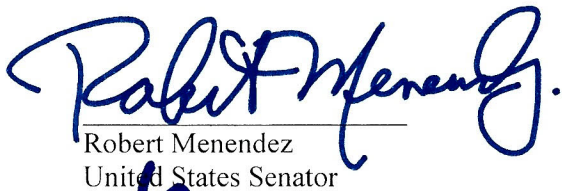
Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator

Brian Schatz  
United States Senator

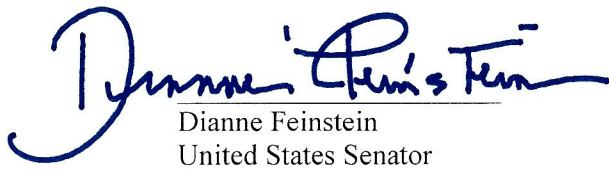
Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

Cory Booker  
United States Senator



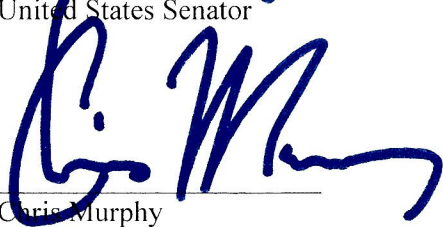
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Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



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Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



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Chris Murphy  
United States Senator



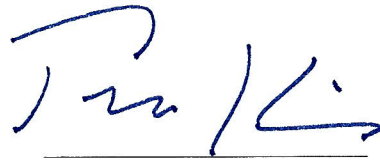
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Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



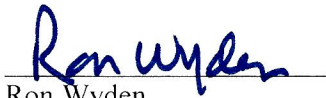
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Charles Schumer  
United States Senator



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Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



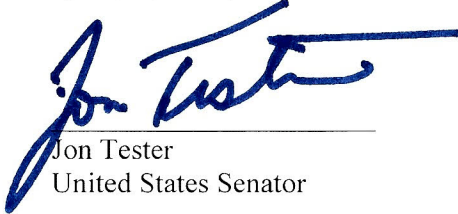
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Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



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Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



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Jon Tester  
United States Senator