

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 5, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education,  
and Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education,  
and Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray,

Thank you for your longstanding leadership and support of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). We greatly appreciate the increased funding provided by the Committee to this vital program in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, and the continued support shown by the subcommittee thus far in FY 2020. We write to ask for continued, robust LIHEAP funding as you finalize the FY20 appropriations, and call your attention to an issue with the current methodology of funding allocations.

Despite the overall increase in appropriations for FY19, many states saw an actual decrease in their year-over-year funding and were not prepared for this unexpected shortfall. Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, Delaware, Arkansas, Indiana, Oregon, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin all lost funding compared to Fiscal Year 18. These states received as much as \$11.2 million less in funding and saw declines as high as 11.82% from the previous fiscal year.

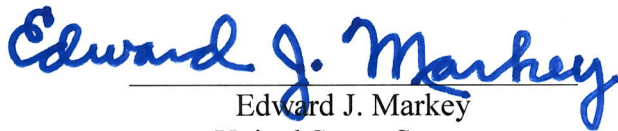
On November 1 of this year, HHS announced the release of 90 percent of the anticipated FY20 LIHEAP funds available under the current Continuing Resolution. In this release of funds, many states again saw a decrease in funding allocations. Massachusetts received just \$114 million, and without changes, we anticipate the Commonwealth to receive a total of less than \$127 million in LIHEAP funds for Fiscal Year 2020 — a decline of more than 14 percent since FY18, despite the overall funding increase over that time period.

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, these continued declines in year over year funding are due to use of the “new” LIHEAP formula used to determine a significant

fraction of the LIHEAP funding distribution. There are concerns that the “new” formula lacks transparency and uses outdated energy cost, climate, and census data. As you know, rising energy costs mean that even with continued, robust, funding by the subcommittee, LIHEAP continues to serve only a fraction of the population who are eligible for the funding. The unexpected funding drop has made it even more difficult for our states’ home energy assistance providers to serve their low-income residents.

The House of Representatives Fiscal Year 2020 Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill seeks to address these deficiencies through language directing the Department of Health and Human Services to hold state funding allocation harmless from previous years. We ask for your assistance in addressing this issue in any final FY20 spending bill, and ensure that all states benefit from the allocated funding. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



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Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



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Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator