

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

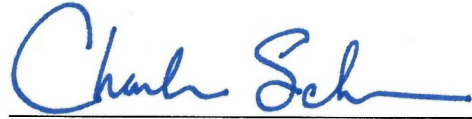
Cory Booker
United States Senator

Michael Bennet

Michael Bennet
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



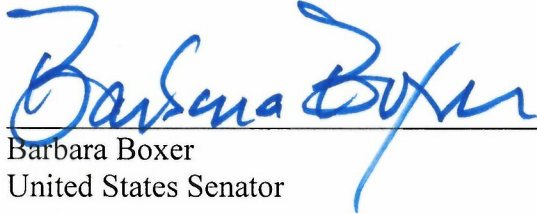
Charles Schumer
United States Senator



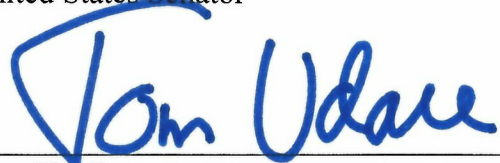
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator




Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



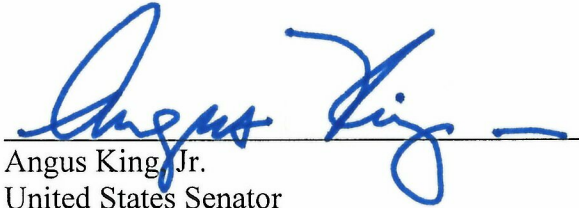
Tom Udall
United States Senator



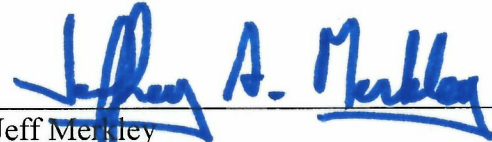
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator




Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Angus King, Jr.
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



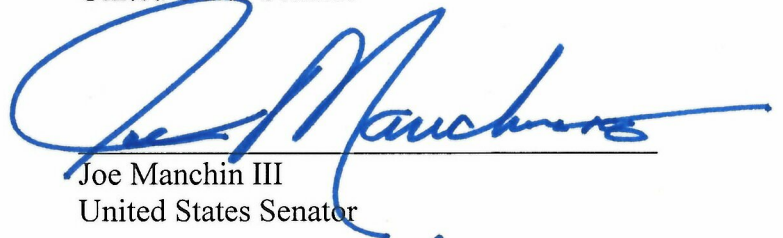
Al Franken
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



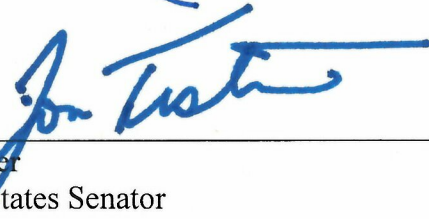
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



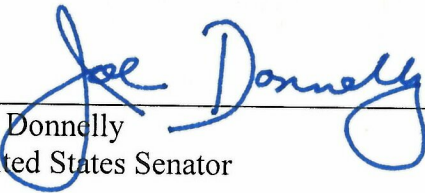
Joe Manchin III
United States Senator




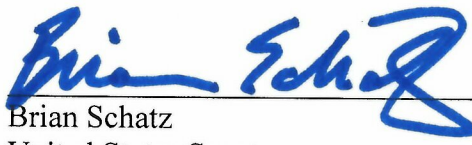
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

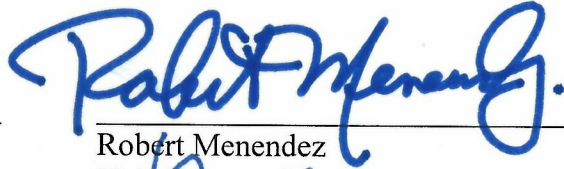


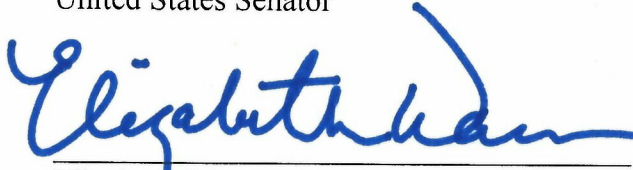
Jon Tester
United States Senator

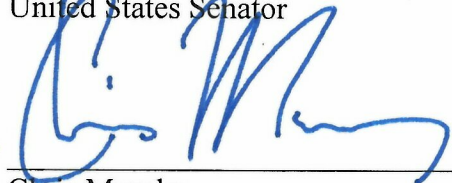

Joe Donnelly
United States Senator


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