

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 13, 2023

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chair, Subcommittee on Labor
Health and Human Services, Education and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor
Health and Human Services, Education and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Baldwin and Ranking Member Capito:

We write to thank you for the Subcommittee's longstanding support of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and to request that you provide the highest level of funding possible for this vital program in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. This request is particularly important because high energy prices are making it more difficult for low-income Americans to heat and cool their homes. To help states respond to further unexpected fluctuations in the supply and price of energy, we also urge you to consider the inclusion of contingency funding.

LIHEAP is the main federal program that helps low-income households and seniors pay their energy bills, providing vital assistance during both the cold winter and hot summer months. Access to affordable home energy is a matter of health and safety for many low-income households, children, and seniors. LIHEAP assistance is an indispensable lifeline, helping to ensure that recipients do not have to choose between paying their energy bills and affording other necessities like food and medicine.

Low-income households across the nation are struggling to keep up with high energy prices caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and inflation has put more pressure on families seeking to pay for energy and other basic necessities. According to the Energy Information Administration (EIA), households nationwide are paying 13% more for heating oil, 10% more for electricity, and 9% more for natural gas this winter compared to last. EIA data also indicates that certain regions, including New England and Alaska, have seen even higher costs for home energy.

While we recognize the competing priorities you must balance, LIHEAP has become even more critical as high energy costs have caused an increase in program participation. Indeed, the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association (NEADA) found that the number of households receiving LIHEAP "during the current winter season is up by an estimated 1.3 million, from 4.9 million to 6.2 million, the largest one-year increase since 2009." And of course, as energy prices go up, the purchasing power of LIHEAP's appropriation goes down: NEADA estimates that the purchasing power of LIHEAP's FY 2023 appropriation fell by \$778 million due to rising energy prices during the winter heating season.

Insufficient funding leaves states in the position of making tough choices about the amount of assistance they will provide and the number of people they will serve with the limited

funding available. Ensuring that LIHEAP is well-funded will help guarantee that the program has the resources it needs to help as many eligible, low-income households and seniors as possible.

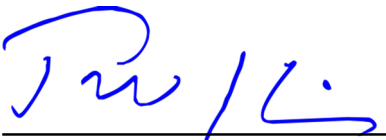
Sincerely,



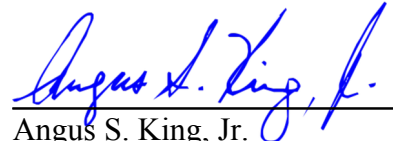
Jack Reed
United States Senator



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



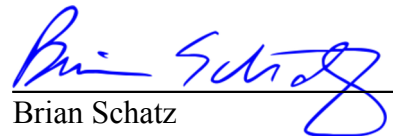
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United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



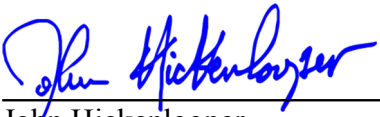
Cory A. Booker
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Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



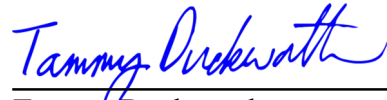
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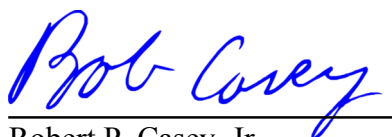
Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



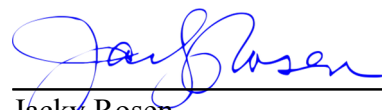
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United States Senator



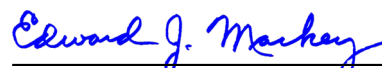
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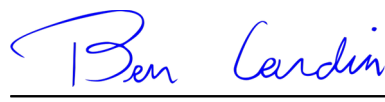
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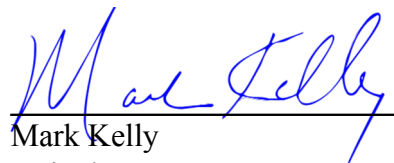
Benjamin L. Cardin
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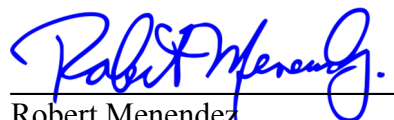
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