

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 29, 2011

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
H-307, The Capitol
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Norman D. Dicks
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
1016 LHOB
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Denny Rehberg
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services and Education
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services and Education
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Dicks, Chairman Rehberg and Ranking Member DeLauro:

The Administration's budget request for Fiscal Year 2012 proposes to reduce funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) by roughly \$2.5 billion, to a total of \$2.57 billion. LIHEAP provides vital assistance to low income families to ensure that they can stay healthy and secure during cold winters in the North and hot summers in the South and the Southwest. Cutting funding for LIHEAP by nearly half would mean that millions of families across the country would no longer be able to receive this vital aid. We are therefore writing to request that the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill for FY2012 provide at least the current funding level of \$5.1 billion for LIHEAP.

As a result of the economic downturn and continued high and rising energy prices, record numbers of families are turning to LIHEAP for assistance for the third year in a row. According to the National Energy Assistance Director's Association, roughly 8.9 million families nationwide are expected to receive LIHEAP heating assistance this winter, an increase of 16 percent from two years ago. But even at those levels, only roughly 20 percent of the families eligible for assistance are receiving LIHEAP aid. Reducing funding for LIHEAP to under \$2.6 billion would mean that more than 3.1 million families nationwide would no longer be able to receive help from this vital program.

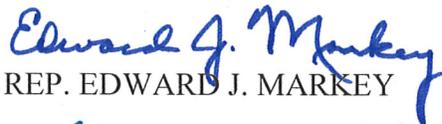
In addition, energy prices have increased substantially in recent years and are projected to remain high. According to the Energy Information Administration (EIA), over the last 5 years, the average cost of heating with heating oil has jumped from \$1,337 to \$2,124 this winter. The average cost of heating with propane has risen from \$1,275 to \$1,966 and the average cost of heating with electricity has increased from \$723 to \$941. Furthermore, according to the EIA, prices for all heating fuels will increase for consumers next winter.

According to a survey conducted by the National Energy Assistance Director's Association, nearly one third of families receiving LIHEAP assistance reported that they went without food during the last five years as a result of high home energy costs. Over 40 percent of families reported sacrificing medical care and 25 percent reported that someone in the home became sick because the home was too cold. Energy is a basic need and without LIHEAP assistance, low income families, senior citizens and the disabled face difficult choices between paying their home energy bills or affording other basic necessities such as prescription drugs or food.

Cutting funding for LIHEAP so dramatically would have a devastating impact on millions of American families already suffering from the economic downturn. We must ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable families can continue to receive help by fully funding this critical program. We therefore urge you to provide at least \$5.1 billion for LIHEAP in FY2012.

Thank you for your continued support of this program and for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,


REP. EDWARD J. MARKEY


REP. LOUIS M. SLAUGHTER

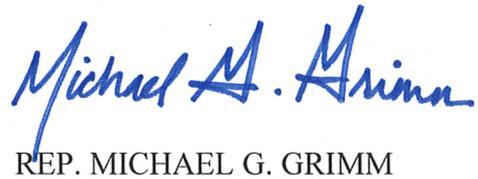

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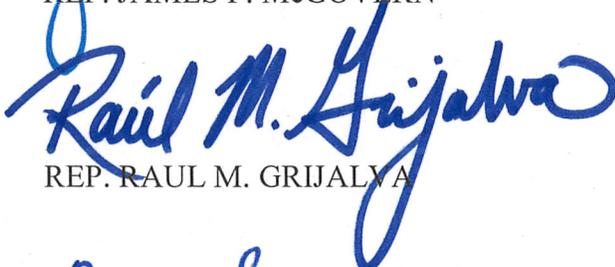
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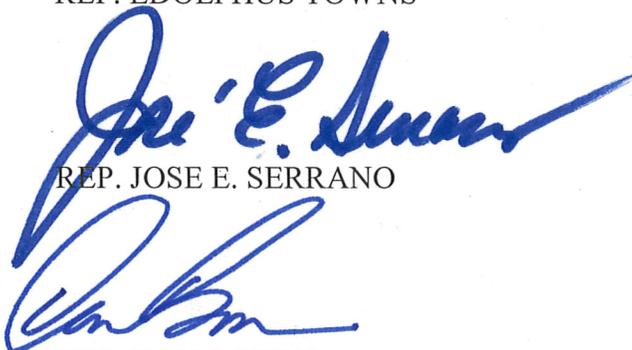
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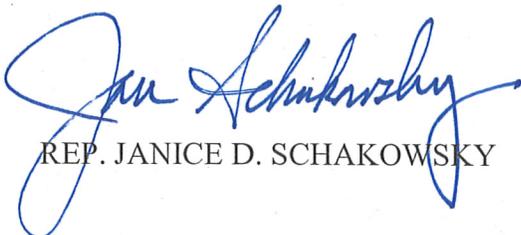
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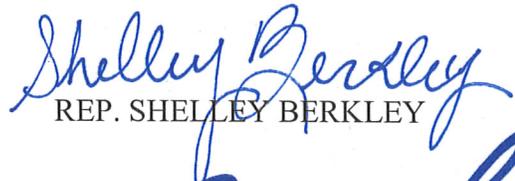
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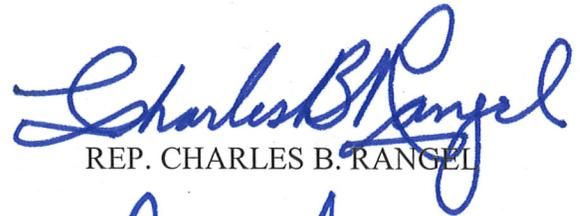
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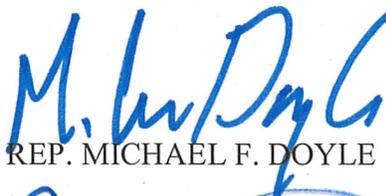
Keith Ellison
REP. KEITH ELLISON

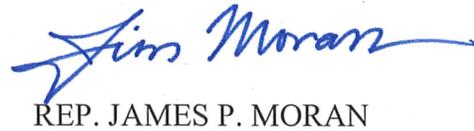

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