

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 22, 2010

The Honorable Daniel Inouye  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye, Ranking Member Cochran, and Chairman Harkin:

We write to thank you for your consistent support of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and to request that you maintain level funding for the program.

As you know, on October 28<sup>th</sup>, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released block grant assistance to states under the Continuing Resolution (CR), which funds the federal government at Fiscal Year 2010 levels through December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Although the CR funded LIHEAP at last year's level of \$5.1 billion, due to the differences in discretionary spending levels reported in the House and Senate, HHS provided grants to states based upon the lower reported value. The results have been devastating for our states during a period when we are entering the coldest months of the year and facing increased heating bills, in particular for homes heated with heating oil, which face a 12 percent increase in costs, as forecasted by the Energy Information Administration. Consequently, unless Congress maintains fiscal year 2010 funding levels for this critical program, the average LIHEAP block grant to states will be cut by 40 percent.

This is a challenging time for low-income Americans. With the unemployment rate at 9.6% nationwide and 42.4 million people receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) support in August, another record and a 50% increase over 2008, maintaining full funding for LIHEAP is essential. The U.S. Census recently reported that 43.6 million people were counted as poor in the United States, or one in seven Americans, the largest number in the measure's 50-year recorded history.

Given the unique structure of the program, unless we finalize funding for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2011 now, the millions of Americans who need help paying their energy bills this

winter could see no additional assistance. As such, under any appropriations bill that Congress considers prior to the expiration of the CR, we would request that you extend LIHEAP's funding through September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011, at last year's funding levels. This would provide stability to the program and allow HHS to allocate LIHEAP funds in a timely manner to provide vital heating assistance this winter.

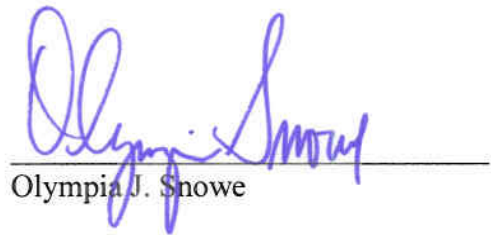
Again, we want to thank you for your commitment to helping low-income families cope during this tough economic climate, and look forward to working together in a fiscally responsible manner to address this serious issue.

Sincerely,



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Jack Reed



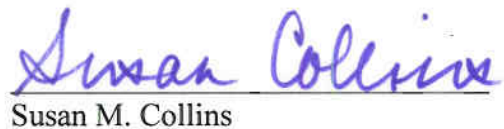
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Olympia J. Snowe



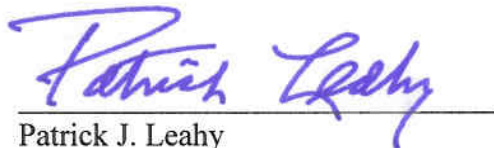
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Sherrod Brown



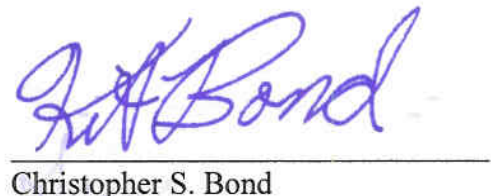
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Susan M. Collins



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Patrick J. Leahy



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Christopher S. Bond



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Barbara A. Mikulski



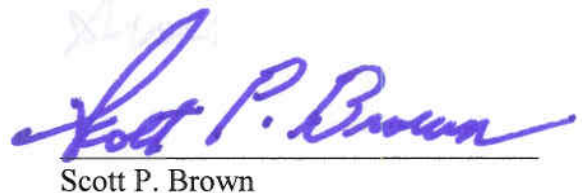
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Richard G. Lugar



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Herb Kohl



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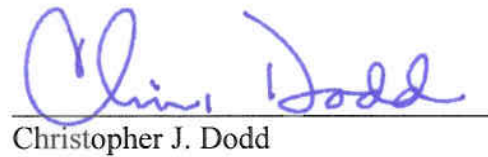
Scott P. Brown

  
Patty Murray

  
Frank R. Lautenberg

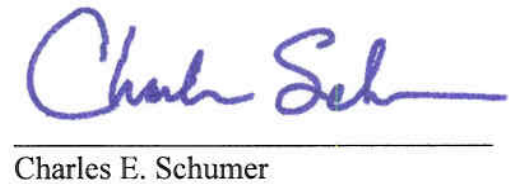
  
Tim Johnson

  
Mary L. Landrieu

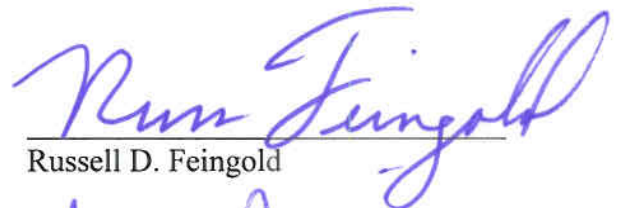
  
Christopher J. Dodd

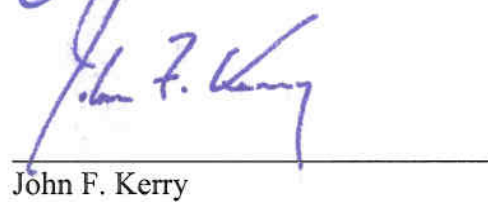
  
Bernard Sanders

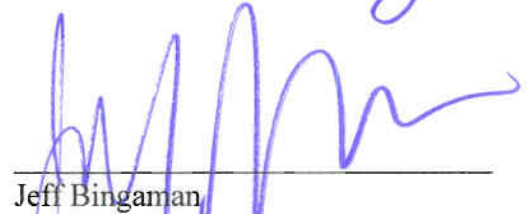
  
Jeanne Shaheen

  
Charles E. Schumer


  
Joseph I. Lieberman

  
Russell D. Feingold

  
John F. Kerry

  
Jeff Bingaman

  
Carl Levin

  
Kirsten E. Gillibrand




  
Sheldon Whitehouse

  
Roland W. Burris

  
Ron Wyden


  
Claire McCaskill

  
Robert P. Casey, Jr.

  
Robert Menendez


  
Maria Cantwell

  
Al Franken

  
Michael F. Bennet

  
Debbie Stabenow

  
Amy Klobuchar

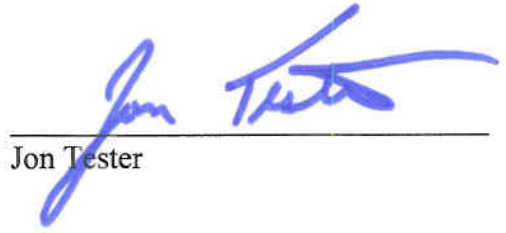
  
Mark Begich

  
John D. Rockefeller IV

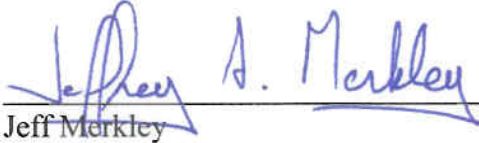
  
Benjamin L. Cardin



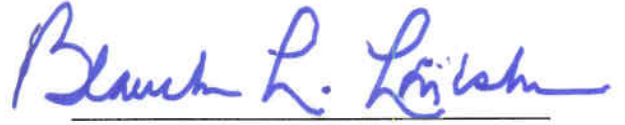
Jim Webb



Jon Tester




Jeff Merkley



Blanche L. Lincoln



Lisa Murkowski



Tom Udall

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