

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 24, 2017

The Honorable Roy Blunt, Chairman  
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

We write in support of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and to express our deep concern with the President's preliminary proposal to eliminate funding for this important program in fiscal year (FY) 2018. We urge you to continue to prioritize funding for this vital safety-net program to help ensure that it meets the needs of eligible low-income households and seniors.


LIHEAP is the main federal program that helps low-income households and seniors with their energy bills, providing vital assistance during both the cold winters and hot summer months. 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. Access to affordable home energy is a matter of health and safety for many low-income households, children, and seniors.

While we recognize the ongoing discretionary budget challenges, we are increasingly concerned that the number of households eligible for LIHEAP assistance continues to exceed available funding at a time when the average cost of home heating is expected to remain unaffordable for millions of households nationwide. In fact, according to the National Energy Assistance Director's Association, 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 nearly \$100 since 2010, from \$520 in FY 2010 to \$409 in FY 2015. This means that the average LIHEAP grant now covers just a fraction of average home energy costs, leaving many low-income families and seniors struggling to pay for the basic necessity of home energy and having fewer resources available to meet other essential needs.

As you begin the difficult work of crafting the FY 2018 funding bill, we thank you for your past support of the program and ask that you take into account the great need for LIHEAP and the impact that cuts to the program could have on our most vulnerable citizens. Prioritizing LIHEAP in FY 2018 would ensure that eligible, low-income households and seniors receive much needed heating and cooling assistance.

Thank you for your attention to and consideration of our request. We look forward to continuing to work with you to support this vital program and help provide access to affordable home energy for the most vulnerable households in our states.

Sincerely,

  
Jack Reed  
United States Senator


  
Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator

  
Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

  
Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator


  
Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

  
Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator

  
Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

  
Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator

  
Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

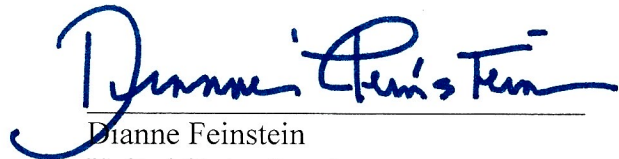
  
Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

  
Brian Schatz  
United States Senator

  
Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



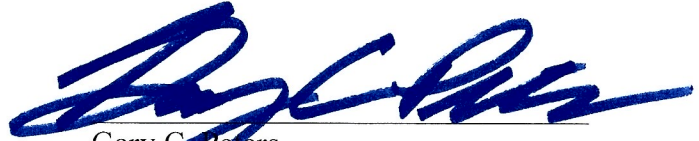
Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Al Franken  
United States Senator



Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

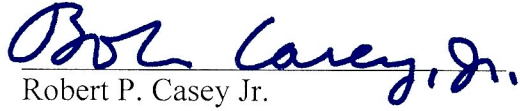


Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



Bill Nelson  
United States Senator

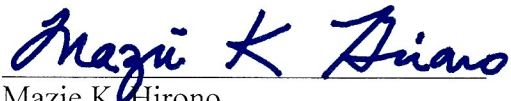




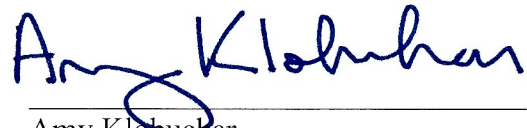
Robert P. Casey Jr.  
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



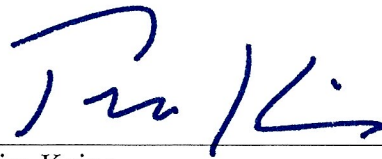
Mazie Hirono  
United States Senator



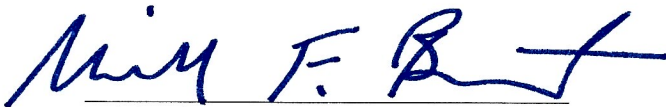
Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



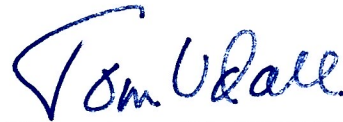
Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



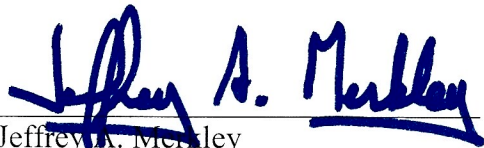
Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



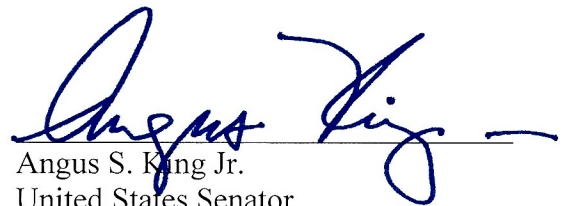
Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



Tom Udall  
United States Senator



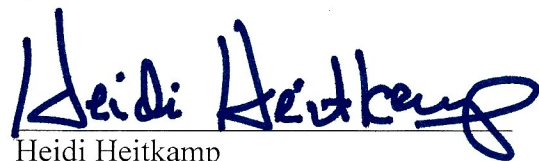
Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



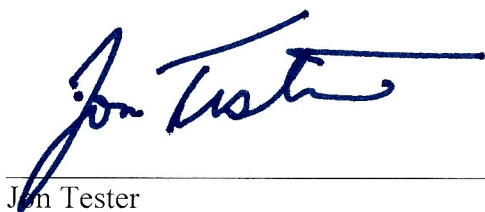
Angus S. King Jr.  
United States Senator



Joe Donnelly  
United States Senator



Heidi Heitkamp  
United States Senator



Jon Tester  
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator