

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 8, 2021

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

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

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Blunt:

We appreciate the Subcommittee's longstanding support of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and request that you provide a robust increase in funding for this vital program in FY 2022 to help ensure that it meets the needs of eligible low-income households and seniors. We also urge you to consider the inclusion of contingency funding to help states withstand severe fluctuations in the price of energy.

LIHEAP is the main federal program that helps low-income households and seniors with their energy bills, providing vital assistance during both the cold winter 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 ongoing discretionary budget challenges, we are very concerned that the number of households eligible for LIHEAP assistance continues to exceed available funding. This is at a time when the average cost of home heating and cooling remains unaffordable for many households nationwide. We appreciate the supplemental LIHEAP funding provided in the American Rescue Plan, which will help families struggling due to the economic impact of COVID-19. However, we also encourage the Subcommittee to continue to address the ongoing need of millions of low-income households through a robust increase in LIHEAP's annual appropriation.


According to the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association, the current funding level is able to serve about six million households or just one out of six eligible households, and those who receive LIHEAP assistance have seen their average grant reduced by about \$48 since 2010, from \$568 in FY 2010 to \$520 in FY 2020. As a result, the purchasing power of the average grant for home heating declined from about 66 percent in FY 2010 to 55 percent in FY 2020. This means that the average LIHEAP grant now covers a lower portion 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.

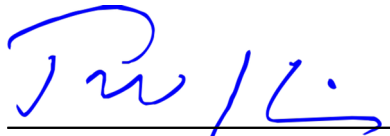
As you begin the difficult work of crafting the FY 2022 funding bill, we thank you again for your past support of the program and ask that you continue to take into account the great need for LIHEAP. Prioritizing LIHEAP in FY 2022 would ensure that eligible, low-income households and seniors receive much needed heating and cooling assistance.

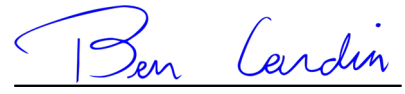
Thank you for your attention to and consideration of our request. We look forward to continuing to work with you to support this important program and to help provide access to affordable home energy for the most vulnerable households in our states.

Sincerely,

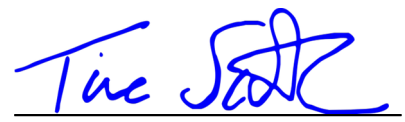
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jack Reed  
United States Senator


  
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Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator


  
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Tim Kaine  
United States Senator

  
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Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator

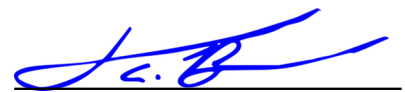
/s/ Brian Schatz  
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Brian Schatz  
United States Senator

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Tina Smith  
United States Senator

  
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Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

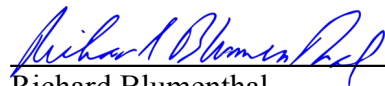
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator

  
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Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

  
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Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



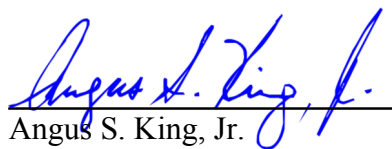
Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



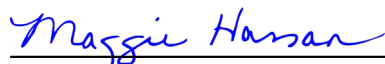
Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



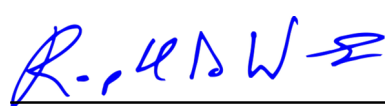
Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator



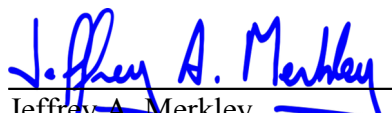
Chris Murphy  
United States Senator




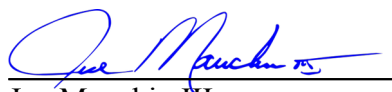
Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator

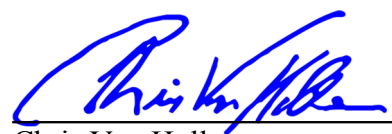


Raphael G. Warnock  
United States Senator


  
Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator


  
Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

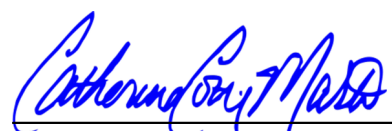
  
Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator


  
Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator

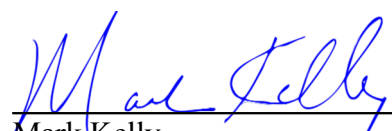
/s/ Alex Padilla  
Alex Padilla  
United States Senator

  
Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator

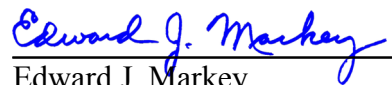
  
Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

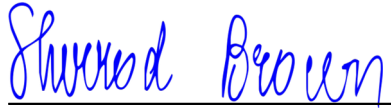
  
Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator

  
Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

  
Mark Kelly  
United States Senator

Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator

  
Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator




Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



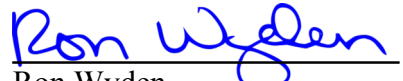
Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper  
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator