

C A M P A I G N F O R

HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE

**Supporting LIHEAP,
The Low Income Home Energy
Assistance Program**

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November 12, 2004

The Honorable C.W. "Bill" Young
U.S. House of Representatives
2407 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Young:

On behalf of the Campaign for Home Energy Assistance, I am writing to urge you to include \$600 million in emergency funds for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) when Congress returns to complete work on the fiscal 2005 appropriations bills. This is in addition to the \$1.911 billion in "regular" LIHEAP funds included in the House-passed FY05 appropriations bill for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education.

Sharply higher costs for heating oil, propane and natural gas are likely to put pressure on the budgets of most American households this winter. For middle-income families, increased energy costs will be a burden. For those with the greatest need — the elderly, disabled and poor families with young children — these higher costs may be disastrous.

LIHEAP was created to help our most vulnerable citizens pay their utility bills during the coldest and hottest months. Unfortunately, the program is able to serve fewer than one out of five eligible households. High energy prices and increased demand for LIHEAP clearly warrant additional emergency assistance as we enter the winter heating season.

Earlier this week, the federal Energy Information Administration released its short-term energy outlook for November in which it forecast higher costs for all fuel types this winter. Heating oil costs in the Northeast are expected to average 37 percent higher than last year. Propane costs are expected to be 26 percent higher than last year. These projections are substantially higher than the projections EIA made in its October winter fuels report. Households heated by natural gas, meanwhile, are projected to pay 15 percent more than last winter.

A recent survey conducted by the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association, a member of the Campaign for Home Energy Assistance, shows demand for LIHEAP has also risen. Households receiving LIHEAP assistance increased from 4.2 million in FY 2002 to nearly 5 million this year. Still, the program serves less than 17 percent of the estimated 30 million eligible households.

The dramatic increase in winter heating fuel costs has clearly increased the overall demand for LIHEAP. To avoid a crisis during the winter heating season, we urge Congress to appropriate at least \$1.911 billion in regular program funding and \$600 million in emergency assistance.

Your leadership can help millions of Americans survive these difficult times. If you have any questions, please contact me 202-331-2962.

Sincerely,



David Fox
Communications Director