

**PUBLIC OPINION
NATIONWIDE SURVEY ON
LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
"LIHEAP"**

September 2006

Prepared for
Campaign For Home Energy Assistance
Washington, DC

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INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The information contained in this report is based on 801 in-depth telephone interviews conducted with heads of household throughout the United States. Household selection on this project was accomplished via a computer-generated pure unweighted (EPSEM) random digit dial (RDD) telephone sample which selects households on the basis of telephone prefix. This method was used because it ensures a randomly selected sample of area households proportionately allocated throughout the sample universe. This method also ensures that all listed and newly listed telephone households are included in the sample.

This survey employed a multi-stage sampling process. The first step was to stratify the sample by state according to the current population residing in each state. Telephone households were then selected within each state using the RDD methodology. A probability sample developed in this manner draws samples proportionately relative to a state's proportional distribution of the U.S. population. This strengthens the ability of the sample to be compared with Census data and other demographic information.

The questionnaire used in this study was designed by BRC in conjunction with The Campaign For Home Energy Assistance (see appended questionnaire). After approval of the preliminary draft questionnaire, it was pre-tested with a randomly selected cross-section of 20 United States residents. The pre-test focused on the value and understandability of the questions, adequacy of response categories, questions for which probes were necessary, and the like.

All of the interviewing on this project was conducted between September 9 through September 24, 2006 at the Center's central location computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) facility where each interviewer worked under the direct supervision of BRC supervisory personnel. Behavior Research Center uses the ACS-QUERY CATI system. The CATI system is a computer controlled interview that uses a tightly-integrated branching pattern to control cuing and display of contingent questions. This system allows for a more relaxed interview environment, while reducing the risks of coding error typically found with hard copy survey instruments. The system also performs internal consistency checks on survey variables and prompts interviewing staff to ask probe questions or clarify answers.

All of the interviewers who worked on this project were professional interviewers of the Center. Each had prior experience with BRC and received a thorough briefing on the particulars of this study. During the briefing, the interviewers were trained on: (a) the purpose of the study; (b) sampling procedures; (c) administration of the questions; and (d) other project-related factors. In addition, each interviewer completed a set of practice interviews to ensure that all procedures were understood and followed.

Interviewing on this study was conducted during an approximately equal cross-section of evening and weekend hours. This procedure was followed to ensure that all households were equally represented, regardless of work schedules. Further, during the interviewing segment of this study, up to four separate attempts, on different days and during different times of day, were made to contact each selected resident. Only after four unsuccessful attempts was a selected household substituted in the sample. Using this methodology, the full sample was completed, and partially completed interviews were not accepted nor counted toward fulfillment of the total sample quotas.

One hundred percent of the completed interviews were edited, and any containing errors of administration were pulled, the respondent re-called, and the errors corrected. In addition, 15 percent of each interviewer's work was randomly selected for validation to ensure its authenticity and correctness. No problems were encountered during this phase of interviewing quality control.

As the data collection segment of this study was being undertaken, completed interviews were turned over to BRC's in-house coding department. The coding department edited, validated and coded the interviews. Upon completion of coding, a series of validity and logic checks were run on the data to ensure it was "clean" and representative of the sample universe.

When analyzing the results of this survey, it should be kept in mind that all surveys are subject to sampling error. Sampling error, stated simply, is the difference between the results obtained from a sample and those which would be obtained by surveying the entire population under consideration. The size of sampling error varies, to some extent, with the number of interviews completed and with the division of opinion on a particular question.

An estimate of the sampling error range for this study is provided in the following table. The sampling error presented in the table has been calculated at the confidence level most frequently used by social scientists, the 95 percent level. The sampling error figures shown in the table are average figures that represent the maximum error for the sample bases shown (i.e., for the survey findings where the division of opinion is approximately 50%/50%). Survey findings that show a one-sided distribution of opinion, such as 70%/30% or 90%/10%, are usually subject to slightly lower sampling tolerances than those shown in the table.

As may be seen in the table, the overall sampling error for this study is approximately +/- 3.5 percent when the sample is studied in total (i.e., all 800 cases). However, when subsets of the total sample are studied, the amount of sampling error increases based on the sample size within the subset.

Sample Size	Approximate Sampling Error At A 95% Confidence Level (Plus/Minus Percentage Of Sampling Tolerance)
800	3.5
700	3.8
600	4.1
500	4.5
400	5.0
300	5.8
200	7.1
100	10.1

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HOME ENERGY SURVEY  
**SEPTEMBER 2006**

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Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm an interviewer for Behavior Research Center, a national marketing research firm. May I speak with the (man/lady) of the house. We are conducting a nationwide survey on issues of the day and would like to speak with you for a few moments. I'm not selling anything and won't ask you to buy or try anything. You may be assured that all of your answers will be held strictly confidential.

1. To begin, these days would you say the cost of energy to heat homes in the winter and cool them in the summer is higher, about the same, or lower than compared to five years ago?

Higher  
 About the same  
 Lower  
 (DO NOT READ) Don't know

2. From what you read or hear, do you think it is more difficult, neither more nor less difficult or less difficult for low income families to pay their heating and cooling bills today than it was five years ago?

More difficult  
 Neither more nor less difficult  
 Less difficult  
 (DO NOT READ) Don't know/Refused

3. Should the government provide funds to help low income senior citizens and the poor pay for services such as home heating, cooling and lighting?

Yes  
 No  
 (DO NOT READ) Undecided

4. Next, I'd like to ask you about the federally funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program also known as LIHEAP? ("LIE HEAP"). Were you aware of the LIHEAP program before I mentioned it to you just now, or is this the first time you have heard of it?

Aware before  
 First time heard of  
 (DO NOT READ) Don't know

5. Thanks, now I'd like to read you a description of LIHEAP, and then ask you a few more questions. (READ THE FOLLOWING:)

The LIHEAP program provides heating and cooling assistance to low-income families and the elderly. Federal LIHEAP money goes to the states where it is administered by local community organizations and where the funding is augmented by charities, churches and local utilities. About 80 percent of the money is used in emergency grants to help low income families, the working poor, those making the transition from welfare to work, the disabled, low income elderly and poverty level families with young children pay their utility bills. Money is also used to weatherize homes and make energy-related repairs or to minimize health and safety risks that result from high energy burdens on low-income people.

Finally, LIHEAP assistance is available throughout the country, but is used mostly in areas that experience extremes of cold or hot weather.

Do you recall seeing or hearing anything about these programs in your state?

- Yes
- No
- (DO NOT READ) Don't know

6. And in general, do you favor or oppose the LIHEAP program to help poor elderly and low income families pay their energy bills during cold or hot weather emergencies?

- Favor
- Oppose
- (DO NOT READ) Unsure

7. In efforts to reduce the federal budget, funding for LIHEAP has been at less than 50 percent of the amount authorized by Congress and some members of Congress have proposed that the LIHEAP program be cut further or even eliminated. Other members of Congress say LIHEAP has been underfunded too long, serves only one of five people who need the assistance, and that it should have its funding increased to provide a safety net to help impoverished elderly and poor families meet their energy bills. What do you think: should Congress substantially increase funding for the LIHEAP program, increase funding modestly, reduce funding further or should the program be eliminated altogether?

- Increase funding substantially
- Increase modestly
- Reduce finding
- Eliminate the program
- (DO NOT READ) Not sure
- (DO NOT READ) No change in budget

8. If your congressman voted to reduce or end funding for programs such as the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, would you be more likely or less likely to vote for them in the next election?

More likely  
 Less likely  
 Would make no difference  
 Don't know

9. And if your congressman voted to increase funding for programs such as the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, would you be more likely or less likely to vote for them in the next election?

More likely  
 Less likely  
 Would make no difference  
 Don't know

### VALIDATION QUESTIONS

I've got just a couple more questions that I would like to ask you for statistical purposes only. This information is absolutely confidential and will only be used for analysis and validation.

- V-1. First, I'm going to read off some age groups. Please tell me which one best describes you. (READ LIST: CHECK ONLY ONE ANSWER)

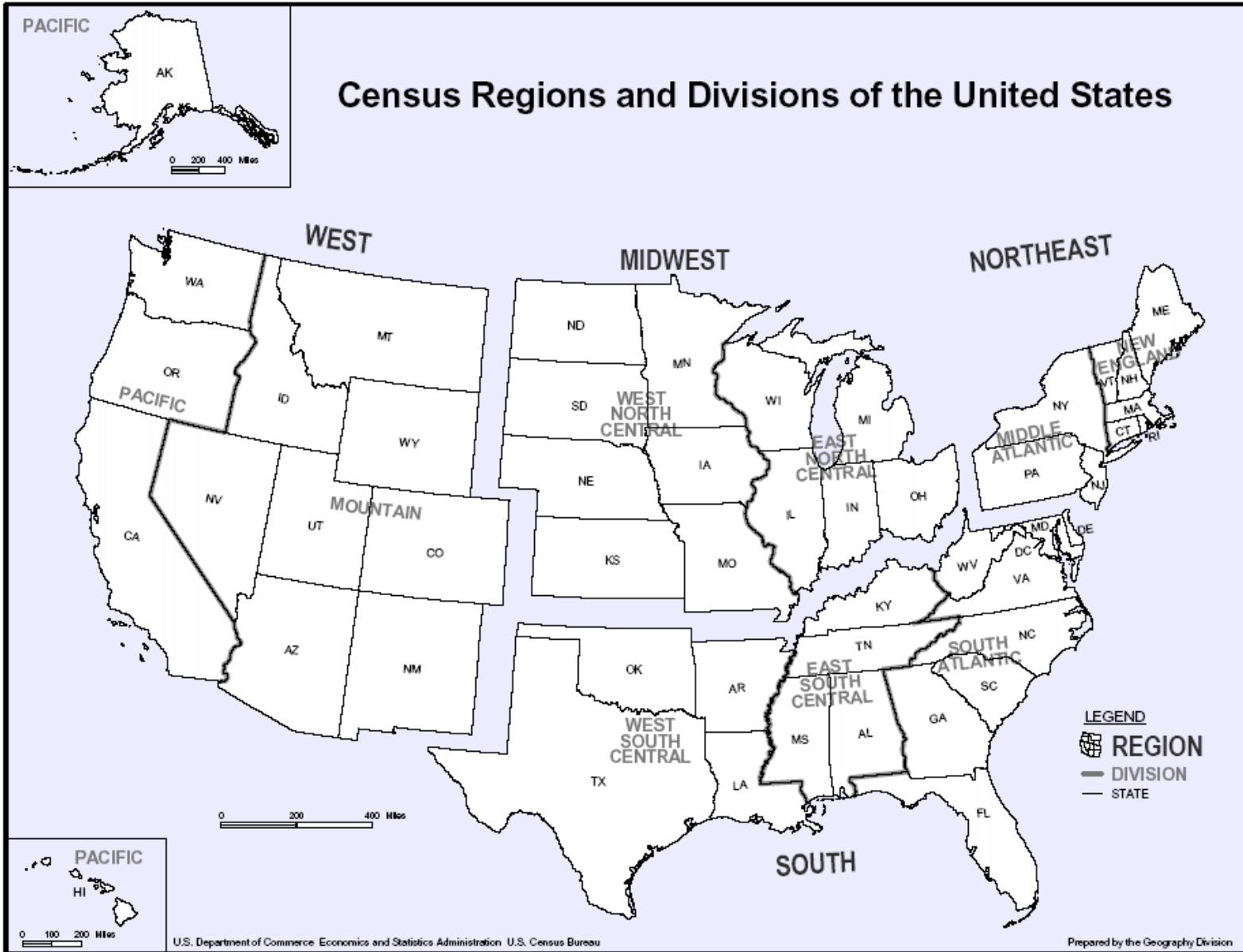
Under 35  
 35 to 49  
 50 to 64  
 65 and older  
 (DO NOT READ) Refused

- V-2. Finally, and again, this is confidential and for statistical comparison only, I'd like to list some broad income categories. Please stop me when I come to the category of annual household income that describes you best: (READ LIST: SELECT ONLY ONE ANSWER)

Less than \$20,000  
 \$20,001 to \$50,000  
 \$50,001 to \$80,000  
 \$80,001 to \$125,000  
 \$125,001 and up  
 (DO NOT READ) Refused

I want to thank you for taking the time to talk with us. Believe me, your opinions are important and will be useful in helping to shape public debate on energy issues.

Census Region: \_\_\_\_\_



## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

### **BACKGROUND**

This study is based on a random sample of adult heads of household in the fifty states. A total of 801 interviews were completed via telephone between September 9 and September 24, 2006. The margin of error for the survey is estimated to be +/- 3.53 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval. The study replicates surveys completed in 1999 and 2002.

### **OVERALL RESULTS**

Public support for federal funding of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) remains strong and stable. Seventy-four percent believe the federal government should provide funding for low-income families and low-income senior citizens to pay for such services as home heating, cooling and lighting. Their support appears to be driven by rapidly rising beliefs (86%) that it is increasingly difficult for low-income families to pay their energy bills and the view among 87 percent of Americans that the cost of energy for their own home heating and cooling is rising – up from 71 percent in 2002 and only 62 percent in 1999.

Fifty-seven percent of Americans say that they would more likely support a congressman for re-election who voted to increase LIHEAP funding and only 15 percent would be inclined to vote for a congressman who voted to reduce or end LIHEAP funding.

### **PERCEIVED CHANGES IN ENERGY COSTS**

Today, 87 percent of Americans believe the cost of energy they use to heat or cool their homes is higher today than just five years ago. This is up from the 71 percent reading collected in August 2002 and 62 percent in August 1999. Only one percent think these costs have diminished.

### **PERCEPTIONS ON DIFFICULTY LOW INCOME FAMILIES HAVE MEETING THEIR ENERGY COSTS**

Eighty-six percent of Americans surveyed in this study believe it is more difficult than five years ago for low income families to pay for their energy bills. This is a historic high and compares to 78 percent in 2002 and 67 percent in 1999.

By ratios of 74 to 16, Americans believe the government should provide funding for low-income families and low-income senior citizens. This figure is basically stable compared to 2002 and 1999. After being read a description of the LIHEAP program, support for LIHEAP registers at an even higher level: 82 to eight percent. On the more specific question on whether funding for LIHEAP should be increased, left unchanged or reduced, the survey finds: 72 percent favor increasing LIHEAP funding, five percent support making no change, only nine percent favor reduction and 14 percent had no opinion.

### **PUBLIC AWARENESS OF LIHEAP AT 27 PERCENT**

General awareness of the federally-funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) totals 27 percent. This is up from 26 percent in 2002 and 25 percent in 1999. When asked whether they had seen or heard anything about LIHEAP for their state, only 27 percent responded in the affirmative with above average readings in the mid-Atlantic, Mountain, E.S. Central and E.N. Central states. Lower awareness is in the South Atlantic, New England and W.S. Central regions.

### **82% FAVOR LIHEAP PROGRAMS TO MEET ENERGY BILLS OF LOW-INCOME FAMILIES AND THE ELDERLY DURING SEVERE WEATHER**

On the general question of LIHEAP as a program to help low income families and the elderly meet their energy bills during severe weather, 82 percent of Americans favor the LIHEAP, while eight percent oppose it and the balance (10%) have no opinion.

### **BY 82% TO 9%, PUBLIC FAVORS EXPANDED LIHEAP FUNDING**

On the more specific question of LIHEAP funding, 42 percent favor "substantial" increased funding for LIHEAP. Three in ten favor "moderate" funding increases and five percent favor the status quo. Overall, support for increased funding rose from 68 percent in 1999 to 72 percent in 2002 and remains at 72 percent today.

Reduced funding is supported by only nine percent, including only six percent who favor no funding whatsoever.

### **POLITICAL IMPACT**

Fifty-one percent of Americans surveyed say they would be more likely to vote against reelecting their congressman if he/she voted to reduce or end LIHEAP funding this year. Only 15 percent would vote for the congressman casting such a vote. At the same time, 57 percent said they would more likely vote for a congressman who voted to increase funding for programs such as LIHEAP.

|                          |
|--------------------------|
| <b>DETAILED FINDINGS</b> |
|--------------------------|

**HISTORIC HIGH IN CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS ABOUT RISING ENERGY COSTS**

Eighty-seven percent of Americans believe the cost of the energy they buy to heat or cool their homes is higher today compared to five years ago. This compares to 71 percent in 2002 and only 62 percent in 1999.

*"These days, would you say the cost of energy to heat homes in the winter and cool homes in the summer is higher, about the same, or lower than compared to five years ago?"*

| <u>COST OF ENERGY IS:</u> | <u>SEPTEMBER<br/>2006</u> | <u>AUGUST<br/>2002</u> | <u>AUGUST<br/>1999</u> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Higher                    | 87%                       | 71%                    | 62%                    |
| Same                      | 7                         | 15                     | 21                     |
| Lower                     | 1                         | 3                      | 5                      |
| Unsure                    | 5                         | 11                     | 12                     |
| ~~~~~                     |                           |                        |                        |

In no region of the country does the proportion who believe heating fuel costs are on the rise register below 85 percent, and the figure rises to historic highs in every region of the U.S.

*"These days, would you say the cost of energy to heat homes in the winter and cool homes in the summer is higher, about the same, or lower than compared to five years ago?"*

| DETAIL — 2006        |        |              |       |        |
|----------------------|--------|--------------|-------|--------|
|                      | HIGHER | No<br>CHANGE | LOWER | UNSURE |
| NATIONAL             | 87%    | 7%           | 1%    | 5%     |
| <u>CENSUS REGION</u> |        |              |       |        |
| New England          | 85     | 5            | 0     | 10     |
| Mid-Atlantic         | 91     | 5            | 2     | 2      |
| E.N. Central         | 89     | 5            | 1     | 5      |
| W.N. Central         | 87     | 4            | 4     | 5      |
| South Atlantic       | 85     | 8            | 0     | 7      |
| E.S. Central         | 92     | 6            | 0     | 2      |
| W.S. Central         | 89     | 7            | 0     | 4      |
| Mountain             | 87     | 4            | 0     | 9      |
| Pacific              | 81     | 15           | 1     | 3      |
| <u>GENDER</u>        |        |              |       |        |
| Men                  | 85     | 9            | 1     | 5      |
| Women                | 88     | 6            | 1     | 5      |
| <u>AGE</u>           |        |              |       |        |
| Under 35             | 77     | 6            | 1     | 16     |
| 35 to 49             | 88     | 8            | *     | 4      |
| 50 to 64             | 89     | 9            | 1     | 1      |
| 65 +                 | 90     | 5            | 1     | 4      |
| <u>INCOME</u>        |        |              |       |        |
| Under \$20K          | 90     | 4            | 0     | 6      |
| \$20K to \$50K       | 85     | 9            | 1     | 5      |
| \$50.1K to \$80K     | 86     | 8            | 1     | 5      |
| \$80.1K +            | 90     | 6            | 1     | 3      |

\* Less than ½ of one percent

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In the past, belief that it is more difficult for low-income families to pay their energy costs tended to rise among lower-income families. Today, this view transcends all income groups.

“From what you read or hear, do you think it is more difficult, neither more nor less difficult or less difficult for low income families to pay their heating and cooling bills today than it was five years ago?”

	<u>MORE</u> <u>DIFFICULT</u>	<u>NO</u> <u>CHANGE</u>	<u>LESS</u> <u>DIFFICULT</u>	<u>UNSURE</u>
NATIONAL	86%	6%	3%	5%
<u>CENSUS REGION</u>				
New England	92	3	3	2
Mid-Atlantic	90	3	2	6
E.N. Central	88	5	3	4
W.N. Central	74	13	7	6
South Atlantic	85	8	3	4
E.S. Central	89	4	-	7
W.S. Central	87	4	2	7
Mountain	86	9	-	5
Pacific	83	9	4	4
<u>GENDER</u>				
Men	82	9	4	5
Women	90	4	2	4
<u>AGE</u>				
Under 35	93	7	3	7
35 to 49	89	6	1	4
50 to 64	82	9	5	4
65 +	89	4	2	5
<u>INCOME</u>				
Under \$20K	87	3	4	6
\$20K to \$50K	88	6	2	4
\$50.1K to \$80K	87	8	2	3
\$80.1K +	82	13	1	4

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**PERCEPTIONS OF DIFFICULTY LOW INCOME FAMILIES HAVE MEETING THEIR ENERGY COSTS**

Eighty-six percent of Americans surveyed in this study believe it is more difficult today than five years ago for low-income families to pay their energy bills. This compares to 78 percent holding this view in 2002 and 67 percent in 1999.

*"From what you read or hear, do you think it is more difficult, neither more nor less difficult, or less difficult for low income families to pay their heating and cooling bills today than it was five years ago?"*

|                            | <u>PAYING ENERGY BILLS TODAY</u> |             |                           |               |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|---------------|
|                            | <u>MORE<br/>DIFFICULT</u>        | <u>SAME</u> | <u>LESS<br/>DIFFICULT</u> | <u>UNSURE</u> |
| <u>LOW-INCOME FAMILIES</u> |                                  |             |                           |               |
| September 2006             | 86%                              | 6%          | 3%                        | 5%            |
| August 2002                | 78                               | 9           | 6                         | 7             |
| August 1999                | 67                               | 11          | 8                         | 14            |

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SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT FUND ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS?

By a ratio of 74 to 16 percent, Americans answer "yes" to the following statement: "Should the government provide funding to help senior citizens and the poor pay for services such as home heating, cooling and lighting." The moderately lower readings in 2006 compared to 2002 is attributed to study margin of error and therefore can basically be interpreted as "no change" since 1999.

In no region does the "yes" response fall below 65 percent and in no region does the "no" response exceed 23 percent.

"Should the government provide funding to help low-income senior citizens and the poor pay for services such as home heating, cooling and lighting?"

	YES	NO	UNSURE
<u>U.S. TOTAL</u>			
September 2006	74%	16%	10%
August 2002	78	14	8
August 1999	78	14	8

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*"Should the government provide funding to help low-income senior citizens and the poor pay for services such as home heating, cooling and lighting?"*

|                      | YES | NO  | UNSURE |
|----------------------|-----|-----|--------|
| NATIONAL             | 74% | 16% | 10%    |
| <u>CENSUS REGION</u> |     |     |        |
| New England          | 87  | 10  | 3      |
| Mid-Atlantic         | 80  | 12  | 8      |
| E.N. Central         | 77  | 11  | 12     |
| W.N. Central         | 65  | 20  | 15     |
| South Atlantic       | 70  | 23  | 7      |
| E.S. Central         | 74  | 9   | 17     |
| W.S. Central         | 72  | 18  | 10     |
| Mountain             | 73  | 14  | 13     |
| Pacific              | 72  | 15  | 13     |
| <u>GENDER</u>        |     |     |        |
| Men                  | 70  | 20  | 10     |
| Women                | 78  | 11  | 11     |
| <u>AGE</u>           |     |     |        |
| Under 35             | 81  | 10  | 9      |
| 35 to 49             | 79  | 15  | 6      |
| 50 to 64             | 71  | 18  | 11     |
| 65 +                 | 69  | 16  | 15     |
| <u>INCOME</u>        |     |     |        |
| Under \$20K          | 81  | 9   | 10     |
| \$20K to \$50K       | 80  | 11  | 9      |
| \$50.1K to \$80K     | 74  | 17  | 9      |
| \$80.1K +            | 59  | 26  | 15     |

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AWARENESS OF LIHEAP PROGRAM

General awareness of the federally-funded LIHEAP is found among roughly a quarter of the public and is basically at the same level as registered in both 1999 and 2002. Awareness is highest in the E.S. Central, E.N. Central and Mid Atlantic census regions of the country and below the norm only in the W.N. Central region. Awareness in the Mountain region literally doubled over the past three years.

"Next, I'd like to ask you about the federally funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program also known as LIHEAP? ("LIE HEAP"). Were you aware of the LIHEAP program before I mentioned it to you just now, or is this the first time you have heard of it?"

	AWARE BEFORE	FIRST TIME HEARD OF
NATIONAL	27%	73%
<u>CENSUS REGION</u>		
New England	10	90
Mid-Atlantic	46	54
E.N. Central	27	73
W.N. Central	15	85
South Atlantic	21	79
E.S. Central	26	74
W.S. Central	22	78
Mountain	40	60
Pacific	26	74
<u>GENDER</u>		
Men	25	75
Women	29	71
<u>AGE</u>		
Under 35	19	81
35 to 49	32	68
50 to 64	29	71
65 +	24	76
<u>INCOME</u>		
Under \$20K	28	72
\$20K to \$50K	31	69
\$50.1K to \$80K	21	79
\$80.1K +	30	70

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Respondents were next read a more detailed description of LIHEAP and asked whether they were aware of any such program in their state. After rising to 34 percent in 2002, it has now declined to 27 percent in 2006 principally due to fall-offs in the Mountain and South Atlantic regions. Awareness tends to rise in the following regions: Mid-Atlantic, Mountain, E.S. Central and E.N. Central regions.

*"Thanks, now I'd like to read you a description of LIHEAP, and then ask you a few more questions.*

*"The LIHEAP program provides heating and cooling assistance to low-income families and the elderly. Federal LIHEAP money goes to the states where it is administered by local community organizations and where the funding is augmented by charities, churches and local utilities. About 80 percent of the money is used in emergency grants to help low-income families, the working poor, those making the transition from welfare to work, the disabled, low-income elderly and poverty level families with young children pay their utility bills. Money is also used to weatherize homes and make energy-related repairs or to minimize health and safety risks that result from high energy burdens on low-income people.*

*Finally, LIHEAP assistance is available throughout the country, but is used mostly in areas that experience extremes or cold or hot weather.*

*Do you recall seeing or hearing anything about these programs in your state?"*

|                      | YES | NO  |
|----------------------|-----|-----|
| NATIONAL             | 27% | 73% |
| <u>CENSUS REGION</u> |     |     |
| New England          | 21  | 79  |
| Mid-Atlantic         | 42  | 58  |
| E.N. Central         | 31  | 69  |
| W.N. Central         | 26  | 74  |
| South Atlantic       | 19  | 78  |
| E.S. Central         | 32  | 68  |
| W.S. Central         | 22  | 78  |
| Mountain             | 35  | 65  |
| Pacific              | 24  | 76  |
| <u>GENDER</u>        |     |     |
| Men                  | 24  | 76  |
| Women                | 30  | 70  |
| <u>AGE</u>           |     |     |
| Under 35             | 24  | 76  |
| 35 to 49             | 29  | 71  |
| 50 to 64             | 33  | 67  |
| 65 +                 | 23  | 77  |
| <u>INCOME</u>        |     |     |
| Under \$20K          | 30  | 70  |
| \$20K to \$50K       | 31  | 69  |
| \$50.1K to \$80K     | 22  | 78  |
| \$80.1K +            | 28  | 72  |

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SUPPORT FOR LIHEAP REGISTERS AT 82 PERCENT

Eighty-two percent of Americans favor LIHEAP, while eight percent oppose it and the balance (10%) had no opinion. In no region of the country does support fall below 74 percent and in no region does opposition exceed eleven percent. The eight to one support level has remained basically unchanged since 1999.

"In general, do you favor or oppose the LIHEAP program to help poor elderly and low income families pay their energy bills during cold or hot weather emergencies?"

	FAVOR	OPPOSE	UNSURE
NATIONAL	82%	8%	10%
<u>CENSUS REGION</u>			
New England	87	0	13
Mid-Atlantic	85	4	11
E.N. Central	84	10	6
W.N. Central	78	9	13
South Atlantic	84	10	6
E.S. Central	89	7	4
W.S. Central	80	11	9
Mountain	74	6	20
Pacific	80	8	12
<u>GENDER</u>			
Men	78	11	11
Women	87	5	8
<u>AGE</u>			
Under 35	85	9	6
35 to 49	85	6	9
50 to 64	84	9	7
65 +	78	8	14
<u>INCOME</u>			
Under \$20K	83	7	10
\$20K to \$50K	87	7	6
\$50.1K to \$80K	83	7	10
\$80.1K +	80	8	12

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### **BY 72% TO 9%, PUBLIC FAVORS EXPANDED FUNDING FOR LIHEAP**

Forty-two percent believe Congress should "substantially increase funding" for LIHEAP and another 30 percent favor modest funding increases. The proportion who believe funding should be "substantially increased" has grown dramatically from only 28 percent in 1999 to 31 percent in 2002 and now stands at 42 percent. Reduced funding is advocated by only three percent and six percent favor eliminating the program entirely. A handful (5%) favor keeping the LIHEAP budget at its current level and the balance, 14 percent, have no opinion.

Among those with an opinion, support for increased funding totals 83 percent. Reduced funding is the view of ten percent and seven percent favor no change.

*"In efforts to reduce the federal budget, funding for LIHEAP has been at less than 50 percent of the amount authorized by Congress and some members of Congress have proposed that the LIHEAP program be cut further or even eliminated. Other members of Congress say LIHEAP has been underfunded too long, serves only one of five people who need the assistance, and that it should have its funding increased to provide a safety net to help impoverished elderly and poor families meet their energy bills. What do you think: should Congress substantially increase funding for the LIHEAP program, increase funding modestly, reduce funding further or should the program be eliminated altogether?"*

|                                | ALL RESPONDENTS |             |             | THOSE WITH AN OPINION* |             |             |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------|
|                                | Sept 2006       | Aug 2002    | Aug 1999    | Sept 2006              | Aug 2002    | Aug 1999    |
| Increase funding substantially | 42%             | 31%         | 28%         | 49%                    | 36%         | 32%         |
| Increase funding moderately    | 30              | 41          | 40          | 35                     | 47          | 47          |
| <b>(Net Increase)</b>          | <b>(72)</b>     | <b>(72)</b> | <b>(68)</b> | <b>(87)</b>            | <b>(83)</b> | <b>(79)</b> |
| Make no funding changes        | 5               | 6           | 5           | 6                      | 7           | 6           |
| Reduce funding further         | 3               | 4           | 6           | 4                      | 4           | 7           |
| Eliminate program              | 6               | 5           | 6           | 6                      | 6           | 8           |
| <b>(Net Reduce)</b>            | <b>(9)</b>      | <b>(9)</b>  | <b>(12)</b> | <b>(10)</b>            | <b>(10)</b> | <b>(15)</b> |
| Not sure/no opinion            | 14              | 13          | 15          | 0                      | 0           | 0           |

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“In efforts to reduce the federal budget, funding for LIHEAP has been at less than 50 percent of the amount authorized by Congress and some members of Congress have proposed that the LIHEAP program be cut further or even eliminated. Other members of Congress say LIHEAP has been underfunded too long, serves only one of five people who need the assistance, and that it should have its funding increased to provide a safety net to help impoverished elderly and poor families meet their energy bills. What do you think: should Congress substantially increase funding for the LIHEAP program, increase funding modestly, reduce funding further or should the program be eliminated altogether?”

	<u>INCREASE FUNDING</u>		NO CHANGE	REDUCE FUNDING	ELIMINATE LIHEAP	NOT SURE
	SUBSTAN- TIALY	MODER- ATELY				
NATIONAL	42%	30%	5%	3%	6%	14%
<u>CENSUS REGION</u>						
New England	46	18	5	-	3	28
Mid-Atlantic	36	35	4	4	5	16
E.N. Central	49	28	8	2	2	11
W.N. Central	28	37	2	9	9	15
South Atlantic	40	30	3	1	10	16
E.S. Central	47	26	4	4	2	17
W.S. Central	48	27	3	2	8	12
Mountain	44	24	7	7	2	16
Pacific	41	33	6	3	5	12
<u>GENDER</u>						
Men	40	28	4	4	10	14
Women	44	31	5	3	2	15
<u>AGE</u>						
Under 35	43	30	3	5	4	15
35 to 49	45	33	3	2	6	11
50 to 64	43	29	3	2	10	13
65 +	38	28	9	4	3	18
<u>INCOME</u>						
Under \$20K	52	23	4	3	4	14
\$20K to \$50K	46	32	5	4	5	8
\$50.1K to \$80K	39	35	3	3	5	15
\$80.1K +	31	30	9	3	11	16

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**POLITICAL IMPACT**

Fifty-one percent of Americans would be less likely to vote to re-elect their congressman if he or she had voted to reduce or end funding for LIHEAP. Fifty-seven percent would be more likely to vote for one who voted to increase LIHEAP funding.

*“If your congressman voted to increase funding for programs such as the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, would you be more likely or less likely to vote for them in the next election?”*

|                      | <u>MORE LIKELY<br/>TO SUPPORT</u> | <u>LESS LIKELY<br/>TO SUPPORT</u> | <u>NO<br/>IMPACT</u> | <u>UNSURE</u> |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| NATIONAL             | 57%                               | 12%                               | 21%                  | 10%           |
| <u>CENSUS REGION</u> |                                   |                                   |                      |               |
| New England          | 54                                | 8                                 | 18                   | 20            |
| Mid-Atlantic         | 64                                | 5                                 | 16                   | 15            |
| E.N. Central         | 61                                | 11                                | 21                   | 7             |
| W.N. Central         | 35                                | 28                                | 28                   | 9             |
| South Atlantic       | 58                                | 17                                | 18                   | 7             |
| E.S. Central         | 60                                | 13                                | 17                   | 10            |
| W.S. Central         | 62                                | 8                                 | 25                   | 5             |
| Mountain             | 47                                | 16                                | 22                   | 15            |
| Pacific              | 54                                | 11                                | 24                   | 11            |
| <u>GENDER</u>        |                                   |                                   |                      |               |
| Men                  | 53                                | 14                                | 23                   | 10            |
| Women                | 60                                | 10                                | 19                   | 11            |
| <u>AGE</u>           |                                   |                                   |                      |               |
| Under 35             | 56                                | 9                                 | 28                   | 7             |
| 35 to 49             | 58                                | 13                                | 22                   | 7             |
| 50 to 64             | 54                                | 15                                | 18                   | 13            |
| 65 +                 | 58                                | 11                                | 20                   | 11            |
| <u>INCOME</u>        |                                   |                                   |                      |               |
| Under \$20K          | 65                                | 11                                | 16                   | 8             |
| \$20K to \$50K       | 58                                | 13                                | 21                   | 8             |
| \$50.1K to \$80K     | 59                                | 11                                | 20                   | 10            |
| \$80.1K +            | 47                                | 16                                | 27                   | 10            |

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“If your congressman voted to reduce or end funding for programs such as the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, would you be more likely or less likely to vote for them in the next election?”

	<u>MORE LIKELY TO SUPPORT</u>	<u>LESS LIKELY TO SUPPORT</u>	<u>NO IMPACT</u>	<u>UNSURE</u>
NATIONAL	15%	51%	23%	11%
<u>CENSUS REGION</u>				
New England	8	51	18	23
Mid-Atlantic	12	58	15	15
E.N. Central	18	52	23	7
W.N. Central	17	37	39	7
South Atlantic	22	46	22	10
E.S. Central	15	55	19	11
W.S. Central	11	54	25	10
Mountain	11	49	25	15
Pacific	15	51	24	10
<u>GENDER</u>				
Men	18	46	25	11
Women	12	56	21	11
<u>AGE</u>				
Under 35	14	51	30	5
35 to 49	13	55	25	7
50 to 64	16	51	19	14
65 +	18	47	22	13
<u>INCOME</u>				
Under \$20K	16	59	18	7
\$20K to \$50K	16	52	23	9
\$50.1K to \$80K	13	53	22	12
\$80.1K +	22	41	27	10

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| <b>APPENDIX</b> |
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SAMPLE PROFILE: 2006AGE OF ADULT SAMPLE

|          |    |
|----------|----|
| Under 35 | 15 |
| 35 to 49 | 30 |
| 50 to 64 | 28 |
| 65 +     | 25 |
| Refused  | 2  |

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

|                  |    |
|------------------|----|
| Under \$20K      | 18 |
| \$20K to \$49.9K | 32 |
| \$50K to \$79.9K | 20 |
| \$80K +          | 14 |
| Refused          | 16 |

CENSUS REGION

|                |    |
|----------------|----|
| West           | 16 |
| Mountain       | 7  |
| W.N. Central   | 7  |
| W.S. Central   | 11 |
| E.N. Central   | 15 |
| E.S. Central   | 6  |
| Mid-Atlantic   | 14 |
| South Atlantic | 19 |
| New England    | 5  |

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