
From: parkelw@nu.com [mailto:parkelw@nu.com]

Sent: Mon 5/3/2010 4:20 PM

Subject: Fw: FY2011 proposed letter

Hello,

This is timely given our discussion at today's LIEAB meeting regarding LIHEAP funding levels for FY 2011. Some of you may have received this directly but I thought I'd share it with the board in case folks would like to write to Congress and advocate for level funding.

Thanks.

Lindsay

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It was good meeting with you all last week. Attached, and below, is the draft letter Mike discussed. We would like to get it to all appropriations offices, attached with a state LIHEAP fact sheet, that has a funding comparison of \$5.1 versus the President's request.

Let us know if you have any edits or suggestions. Thanks.

Dear Congressman _____,

As you are aware, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides a vital safety net for our nation's low-income households. LIHEAP provides critical assistance to low-income families, senior citizens, and disabled individuals who struggle with home heating and cooling bills during times extreme weather.

This past year, the number of low-income households requesting heating assistance reached record levels for a second year in a row, growing from 7.7 million to 8.8 million. Soon, an additional 583,000 low-income households are expected to receive cooling assistance under the program.

In both FY2009 and FY2010, Congress made a decisive commitment to those who depend on LIHEAP by allocating \$5.1 billion to the program. This investment allowed LIHEAP to grow from a regional program, serving mostly low-income households living in colder states, to a national program, serving at-risk residents in all states. In turn, LIHEAP has emerged as one of the most successful emergency assistance programs in the country.

The President's proposed FY2011 budget, while high from an historic perspective, would reduce LIHEAP funding by \$1.8 billion – a more than 35 percent reduction. The Administration proposes to bridge this funding gap with the enactment of a new mandatory spending program – a so-called “trigger” – that would allocate additional funds during times of high energy prices and economic distress.

Respectfully, we believe it is crucial that Congress maintain its commitment to LIHEAP by continuing to allocate at least \$5.1 billion for the program for FY2011. While the notion of a trigger mechanism may possess merit, it would be better considered in the future, under the auspices of reauthorization, and not as a substitute for critically needed funding.

In its FY2011 budget justification, the Department of Health and Human Services estimates the loss in low-income energy assistance to your state to be XXXX if the Administration's LIHEAP proposal is enacted.

Restoring the proposed cuts to LIHEAP and maintaining funding at \$5.1 billion level in FY2011 will avoid this eventuality and ensure the continued efficacy of this vital program.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

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