

November 25, 2013

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski, Ranking Member Shelby, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Lowey:

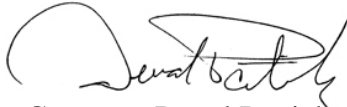
We write to express our support for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which provides a vital safety net for our nation's low-income households. Specifically, as you develop an omnibus appropriations bill for the remainder of FY 2014, we urge you to fund LIHEAP at the \$3.6 billion level provided by the Senate Appropriations Committee in its FY 2014 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.

With our economy still recovering from the Great Recession and households facing high energy costs, millions of Americans rely on the targeted assistance LIHEAP provides to help them cover their heating costs in the winter and cooling costs in the summer. LIHEAP is a critical bridge for Americans – many of them elderly, disabled or caring for dependent children – who otherwise may be forced to choose between paying home energy bills and paying for food, medicine, or other essentials.

Adequate funding for LIHEAP is particularly important this year, as funding has already been negatively impacted in recent years by reduced appropriations and sequestration cuts. The requested FY 2014 appropriation of \$3.6 billion is considerably less than those of recent years; by comparison, the LIHEAP appropriation for FY 2010 totaled \$5.1 billion, 29 percent more than the amount provided this year by the Senate Appropriations Committee. Though funding has declined, heating costs remain high – according to data from the Energy Information Administration (EIA), heating costs this winter are projected to rise six percent from last winter. Projections from EIA data estimate that average winter home heating costs will climb to \$977 per household, while the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association (NEADA) estimates that average LIHEAP grants could fall to about \$400, covering less than half of the average winter home heating costs for a household. At the same time, demand for LIHEAP assistance remains unchanged in many states.

We understand the budget challenges facing Congress and deeply appreciate your longstanding support for LIHEAP. As governors, we continuously work to balance our state budgets while maintaining critical support programs for low- and middle-income households in our states. LIHEAP assistance remains an indispensable lifeline for millions of families struggling to heat and cool their homes, and we strongly urge Congress to adopt a responsible budget, which will put America on a path to continued growth and prosperity and give us the tools we need to serve our citizens.

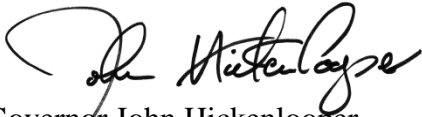
Sincerely,



Governor Deval Patrick
Massachusetts



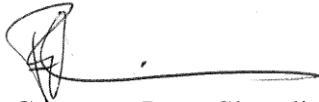
Governor Dannel P. Malloy
Connecticut



Governor John Hickenlooper
Colorado



Governor Paul LePage
Maine



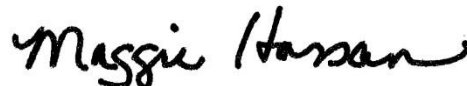
Governor Peter Shumlin
Vermont



Governor John de Jongh, Jr.
Virgin Islands



Governor Lincoln Chafee
Rhode Island



Governor Maggie Hassan
New Hampshire



Governor Jack Markell
Delaware



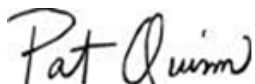
Governor Mark Dayton
Minnesota



Governor Alejandro Javier García Padilla
Puerto Rico



Governor Martin O'Malley
Maryland



Governor Pat Quinn
Illinois



Governor Earl Ray Tomblin
West Virginia

Cc: The Honorable Patty Murray, Chairwomen, Senate Committee on the Budget
The Honorable Jeff Sessions, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on the Budget
The Honorable Paul Ryan, Chairman, House Committee on the Budget
The Honorable Chris Van Hollen, Ranking Member, House Committee on the Budget
The Honorable Harry Reid, Senate Majority Leader
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Senate Republican Leader
The Honorable John Boehner, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, House Democratic Leader