Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 18, 2012

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to you to request that you prioritize the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) in your Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) budget proposal. As you know, LIHEAP is the primary federal program that helps low-income households, veterans, and seniors pay their energy bills during both the cold winter and hot summer months. As increasing energy costs account for a growing portion of the household budget for millions of Americans, we encourage you to include in your FY14 request a minimum of $4.7 billion for this critical program upon which so many Americans rely.

According to a recent Energy Information Administration (EIA) report, household expenditures this winter for heating oil and natural gas are projected to increase by 19 percent and 15 percent, respectively. While these increases affect middle-income households, it disproportionately burdens low-income households, many of which are seniors and on fixed-incomes. Moreover, with Social Security benefits increasing by only 1.7 percent this year, or an average of $19 per month, many elderly Americans will have to choose between heating and eating this winter.

As supporters of the LIHEAP program, we acknowledge the difficult fiscal challenges we face as a nation. However, we are deeply concerned that while funding for the program has declined by 32 percent since 2010 to $3.47 billion in 2012, the demand for the program continues to exceed those receiving assistance. And for those families fortunate to receive assistance, the amount provided has dropped in the face of higher heating costs. Accordingly, we urge you to restore LIHEAP funding to its FY2011 level of $4.7 billion.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to working with you to address this important priority.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Markey

Peter T. King

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Peter Welch

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