PETER WELCH
AT-LARGE, VERMONT

CHIEF DEPUTY WHIP

HOUSE DEMOCRATIC
STEERING & POLICY COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

COMMITTEE ON
OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT
REFORM

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–4500

2303 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515–4500
202–225–4115

DISTRICT:
128 LAKESIDE AVENUE
SUITE 235
BURLINGTON, VT 05401
(802) 652–2450
(888) 605–7270

March 16, 2018

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Tom Cole and Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro,

We are writing to request that you prioritize the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) in your Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 appropriations bill by including no less than $4.7 billion for this program that provides critical support to our most vulnerable citizens.

LIHEAP helps low-income households and seniors with their energy bills, providing vital assistance during both the cold winter and hot summer months. LIHEAP households are among the most vulnerable in the country. According to the National Energy Assistance Director's Association (NEADA), nearly 90 percent of LIHEAP recipients have at least one household member who is a child, elderly, or disabled. For these households, LIHEAP funding has been a lifeline during challenging economic times. Access to affordable home energy is not a luxury – it is a matter of health and safety.

We understand the ongoing discretionary budget challenges. However, we are deeply concerned that funding for LIHEAP has declined more than 30 percent in recent years. Moreover, the number of households eligible for assistance continues to exceed available funding. According to NEADA, the total number of households receiving LIHEAP assistance has declined by 15.5 percent between FY 2010 and FY 2015, from 8.1 million to 6.8 million. About 1.3 million poor households have lost access to critical LIHEAP assistance and struggle to pay for the basic necessity of home energy in addition to other essentials like food and medicine.

Funding has declined by almost $1.7 billion since FY 2010, yet energy costs have remained high, reducing the purchasing power of LIHEAP assistance. Recipients have seen their average LIHEAP grant reduced by about $107 since 2010, from $520 in FY 2010 to $413 in FY 2015. The average LIHEAP grant is estimated to cover less than half of the average home heating costs for a household this winter, meaning that many low-income families and seniors will have fewer resources available to meet other basic needs.

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

As you finalize your FY 2019 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we ask that you take into account the great need for LIHEAP. We urge you to reprioritize this program and restore funding to this program to a level no less than $4.7 billion.

Thank you for your attention to and consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

PETER WELCH
Member of Congress

PETER T. KING
Member of Congress

JAMES P. MCGOVERN
Member of Congress

LOU BARLETTA
Member of Congress

DORIS MATSUI
Member of Congress

PAUL D. TONKO
Member of Congress

ELIOT L. ENGEL
Member of Congress

TED DEUTCH
Member of Congress

JOHN SARBANES
Member of Congress

MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO
Member of Congress

FRANK A. LOBIONDO
Member of Congress

JUDY CHU
Member of Congress

GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN
Member of Congress

C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER
Member of Congress

LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ
Member of Congress

STEVE COHEN
Member of Congress

ADAM SCHIFF
Member of Congress

BILL PASCRELL, JR.
Member of Congress

MICHAEL R. TURNER
Member of Congress

JAN SCHAKOWSKY
Member of Congress

RICHARD M. NOLAN
Member of Congress

ALCEE L. HASTINGS
Member of Congress

MARCIA L. FUDGE
Member of Congress

ALBIO SIRES
Member of Congress

LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ
Member of Congress

TIMOTHY J. WALZ
Member of Congress

NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ
Member of Congress

STEPHEN F. LYNCH
Member of Congress

BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress

GWEN MOORE
Member of Congress

ADAM KINZINGER
Member of Congress

DAVID N. CICILLINE
Member of Congress

GERALD E. CONNOLLY
Member of Congress

GREGORY W. MEEKS
Member of Congress

TERRI A. SEWELL
Member of Congress

BOBBY L. RUSH
Member of Congress

CHELLIE PINGREE
Member of Congress

DANNY K. DAVIS
Member of Congress

ANDRÉ CARSON
Member of Congress

PETER A. DEFAZIO
Member of Congress

RICK LARSEN
Member of Congress

JIM COSTA
Member of Congress

JIM LANGEVIN
Member of Congress

JARED POLIS
Member of Congress

NIKI TSONGAS
Member of Congress

JOHN K. DELANEY
Member of Congress

JOHN J. FASO
Member of Congress

GRACE F. NAPOLITANO
Member of Congress

HAKEEM JEFFRIES
Member of Congress

JUAN VARGAS
Member of Congress

CAROL SHEA-PORTER
Member of Congress

JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN
Member of Congress

DAVE LOEBSACK
Member of Congress

MARC VEASEY
Member of Congress

RAUL M. GRIJALVA
Member of Congress

MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress

ANTHONY BROWN
Member of Congress

RON KIND
Member of Congress

TULSI GABBARD
Member of Congress

BRADLEY S. SCHNEIDER
Member of Congress

MICHAEL CAPUANO
Member of Congress

SANDER M. LEVIN
Member of Congress

BRENDA L. LAWRENCE
Member of Congress

LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER
Member of Congress

DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ
Member of Congress

JOE CROWLEY
Member of Congress

BRIAN FITZPATRICK
Member of Congress

FILEMON VELA
Member of Congress

STEPHANIE MURPHY
Member of Congress

JIM HIMES
Member of Congress

BRENDAN F. BOYLE
Member of Congress

CHRIS COLLINS
Member of Congress

LOIS FRANKEL
Member of Congress

SEAN PATRICK MALONEY
Member of Congress

CLAUDIA TENNEY
Member of Congress

JOSEPH P. KENNEDY III
Member of Congress

JAMIE RASKIN
Member of Congress

JACK BERGMAN
Member of Congress

JACKY ROSEN
Member of Congress

RAUL RUIZ
Member of Congress

STACEY E. PLASKETT
Member of Congress

ELISE M. STEFANIK
Member of Congress

WILL HURD
Member of Congress

WILLIAM R. KEATING
Member of Congress

A. DONALD MCEACHIN
Member of Congress

MIKE DOYLE
Member of Congress

VAL BUTLER DEMINGS
Member of Congress

DAVID SCOTT
Member of Congress

ANN MCLANE KUSTER
Member of Congress

JOYCE BEATTY
Member of Congress

JOHN YARMUTH
Member of Congress

TOM O'HALLERAN
Member of Congress

MARK DESAULNIER
Member of Congress

VICENTE GONZÁLEZ
Member of Congress

JOHN B. LARSON
Member of Congress

COLLIN C. PETERSON
Member of Congress

LEE ZELDIN
Member of Congress

DEBBIE DINGELL
Member of Congress

EMANUEL CLEAVER, II
Member of Congress

BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN
Member of Congress

JULIA BROWNLEY
Member of Congress

KEITH ELLISON
Member of Congress

ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT
Member of Congress

ELIZABETH H. ESTY
Member of Congress

JOHN LEWIS
Member of Congress

ADRIANO ESPAILLAT
Member of Congress

MAXINE WATERS
Member of Congress

RYAN A. COSTELLO
Member of Congress

BILL FOSTER
Member of Congress

FREDERICA S. WILSON
Member of Congress

DWIGHT EVANS
Member of Congress

ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON
Member of Congress

TOM MARINO
Member of Congress

ED PERLMUTTER
Member of Congress

CEDRIC L. RICHMOND
Member of Congress

AL GREEN
Member of Congress

BRIAN HIGGINS
Member of Congress

AL LAWSON
Member of Congress

ALAN LOWENTHAL
Member of Congress

DANIEL W. LIPINSKI
Member of Congress

JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress

CHERI BUSTOS
Member of Congress

JERROLD NADLER
Member of Congress

DONALD M. PAYNE, JR
Member of Congress

DIANA DEGETTE
Member of Congress

ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS
Member of Congress

DON YOUNG
Member of Congress

RICHARD E. NEAL
Member of Congress

DANIEL T. KILDEE
Member of Congress

GENE GREEN
Member of Congress

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
Member of Congress

G. K. BUTTERFIELD
Member of Congress

NORMA J. TORRES
Member of Congress

DONALD S. BEYER JR.
Member of Congress

PRAMILA JAYAPAL
Member of Congress

JOHN KATKO
Member of Congress

FRANK PALLONE, JR.
Member of Congress

BETO O'ROURKE
Member of Congress

SUZANNE BONAMICI
Member of Congress

CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress

DANIEL M. DONOVAN JR.
Member of Congress

ALMA S. ADAMS
Member of Congress

KATHLEEN M. RICE
Member of Congress

TONY CÁRDENAS
Member of Congress

AUMUA AMATA COLEMAN RADEWAGEN
Member of Congress

NANETTE DIAZ BARRAGÁN
Member of Congress

GLENN 'GT' THOMPSON
Member of Congress

DENNY HECK
Member of Congress

SETH MOULTON
Member of Congress

THOMAS R. SUOZZI
Member of Congress

ROBIN L. KELLY
Member of Congress

EARL BLUMENAUER
Member of Congress

LLOYD SMUCKER
Member of Congress

JIMMY GOMEZ
Member of Congress

BEN RAY LUJÁN
Member of Congress

COLLEEN HANABUSA
Member of Congress

YVETTE D. CLARKE
Member of Congress

WM. LACY CLAY
Member of Congress

ADAM SMITH
Member of Congress

SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.
Member of Congress

KAREN BASS
Member of Congress

DARREN SOTO
Member of Congress

RUBEN GALLEGO
Member of Congress

BRUCE POLIQUIN
Member of Congress

DONALD NORCROSS
Member of Congress

BENNIE G. THOMPSON
Member of Congress

SHEILA JACKSON LEE
Member of Congress

DARIN LAHOOD
Member of Congress

HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON JR.
Member of Congress

MIKE KELLY
Member of Congress

EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON
Member of Congress