

Senators Patterson, Schauer, Allen, Richardville, Jelinek, Kahn, Van Woerkom, Hardiman, Birkholz, Gleason and Hunter offered the following concurrent resolution:

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 4.

A concurrent resolution to memorialize the United States Congress to increase, rather than cut, funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Whereas, The vulnerable in society face difficult choices in the winter when temperatures dip extremely low. Elderly persons on fixed incomes, disabled persons, households containing chronically ill persons, single-parent households, and the working poor are especially vulnerable to unaffordable energy bills. In the winter months, these households often try to make do with less heat than they need or by sacrificing necessities. The vulnerable in society often face a difficult choice between paying to heat their homes, paying for food, or paying for medical care. This is particularly true in states like Michigan with struggling economies; and

Whereas, Fortunately, there is a federally-funded program to help those most in need. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federal block grant program that provides billions annually to help needy families pay energy bills. LIHEAP funds have averted numerous tragedies by enabling needy families to keep their homes at healthy and safe temperatures and by preventing utility service shutoffs during the bitter cold months of winter; and

Whereas, Unfortunately, LIHEAP funding has not kept pace with inflation or need. Since the inception of the program, energy prices have risen and the number of households needing assistance has increased significantly. In FY 2006, LIHEAP served less than one-quarter of those eligible to receive assistance across the country. The number of households in Michigan that depend on LIHEAP has grown to almost half a million; and

Whereas, According to the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association (NEADA), if LIHEAP funding is cut, states will be forced to eliminate assistance to more than one million households across the nation. Additionally, NEADA says in order to help all of those who currently need energy assistance, LIHEAP funding must be increased; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That we memorialize the United States Congress to increase, rather than cut, funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.