

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2016

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) 2017 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.

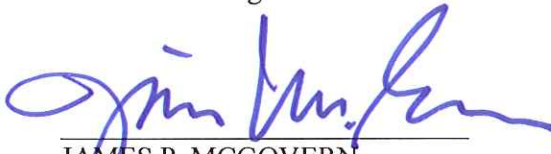
As you finalize your FY 2017 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we ask that you take into account the great need for LIHEAP. We urge you to reprioritize this program and restore funding to this program to a level no less than \$4.7 billion.

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


Sincerely,

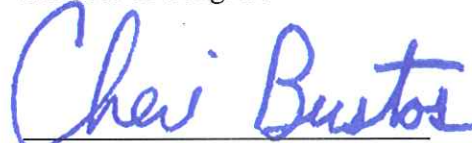

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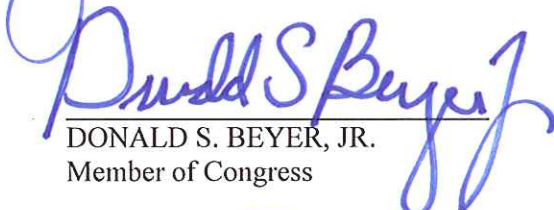

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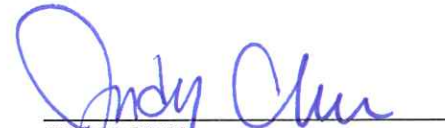

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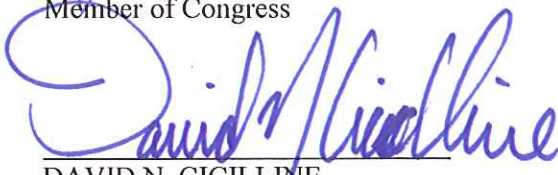

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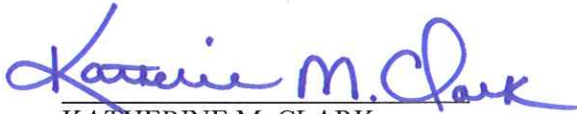

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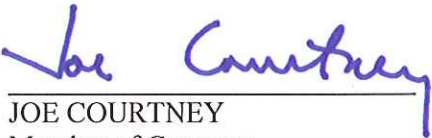
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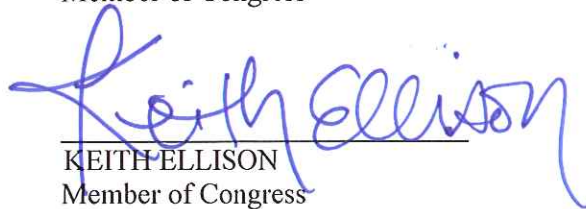
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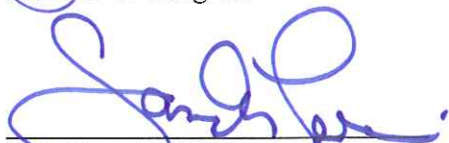

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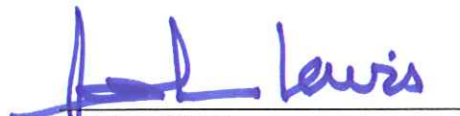

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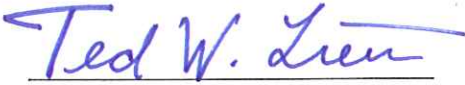

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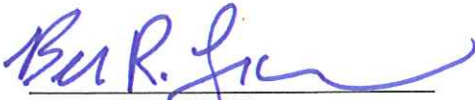
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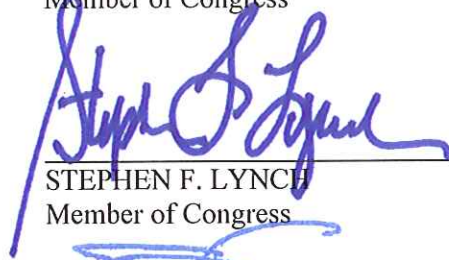
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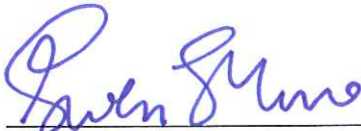
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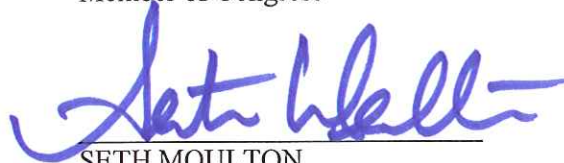
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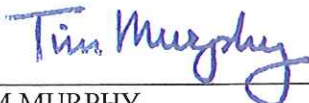
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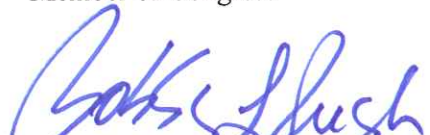

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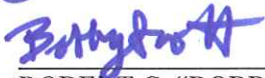

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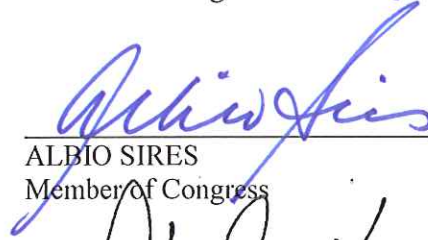
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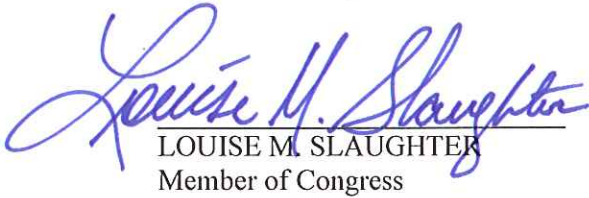
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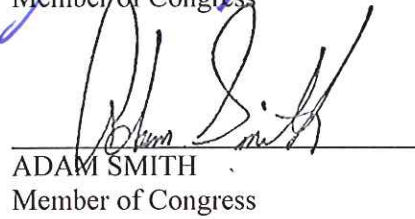
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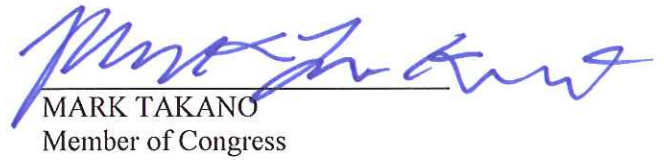
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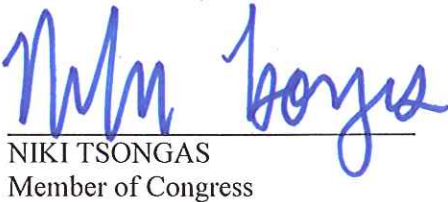
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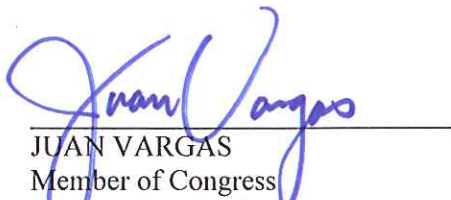
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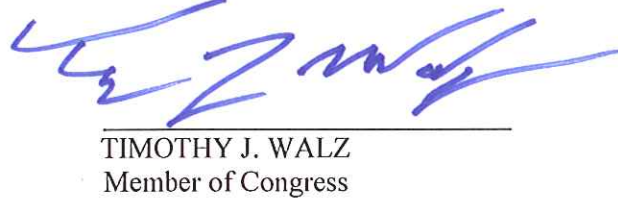
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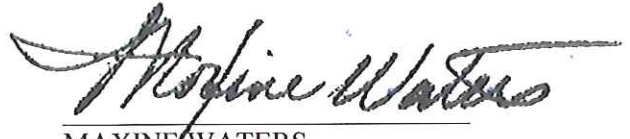
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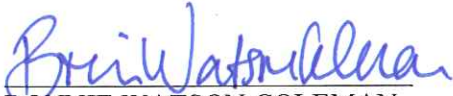
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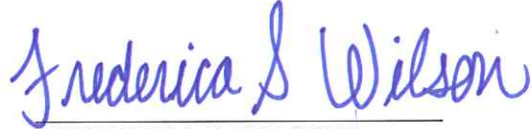
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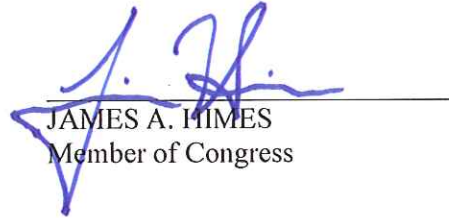
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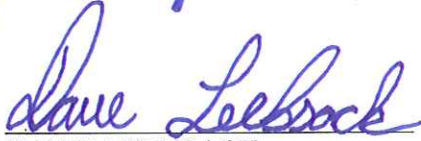
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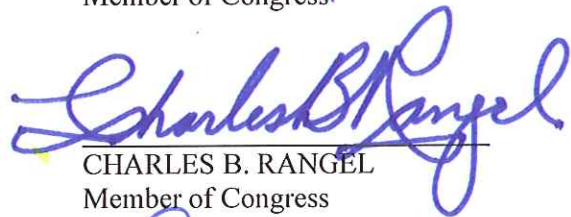
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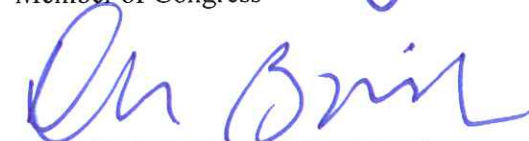
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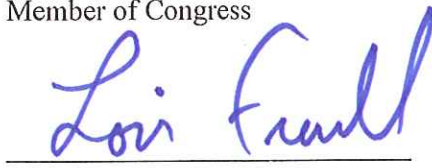

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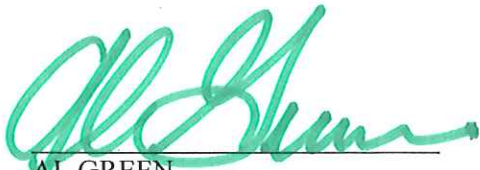

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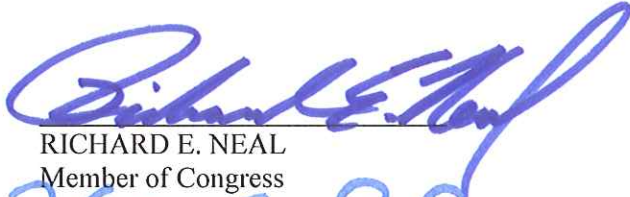

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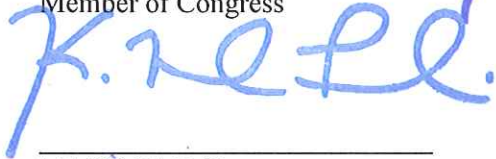
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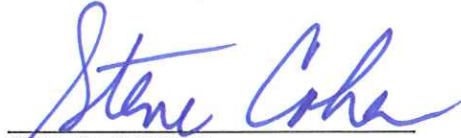
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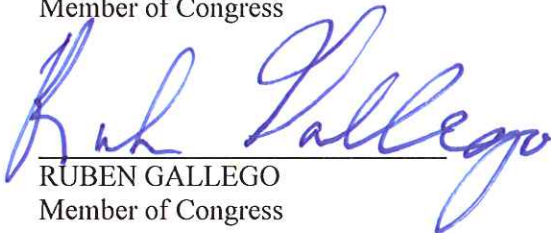
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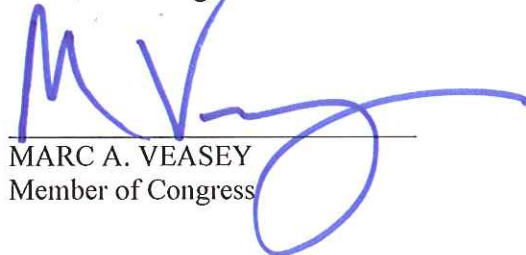
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