

THE LIHEAP COALITION

Organizations and companies supporting the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

DATE: July 22, 2010

FROM: LIHEAP Coalition Co-Chairs, Olivia Wein and Pat Markey

RE: LIHEAP Coalition Update: House Labor-HHS-Education Spending Subcommittee Marks Up FY 2011 Spending Bill that provides \$5.1 Billion For LIHEAP. Also, GAO Report Critical of LIHEAP and HHS's Swift Response

Dear LIHEAP Advocate,

On July 15, 2010, the House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee marked-up its version of the FY 2011 Labor-HHS- Education appropriations bill. The bill maintains \$5.1 billion for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program and has cited that "home heating costs remain high, unpredictable, and unaffordable for many households." The subcommittee favorably reported the measure to the full House Appropriations Committee. The full committee has not yet scheduled a mark-up of the subcommittee bill, so additional details regarding LIHEAP are not yet available. Chairman Obey's statement on the subcommittee bill and a summary table with the funding levels for programs are available at <http://appropriations.house.gov/>.

As some of you are aware, the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently released a report on the LIHEAP program entitled, *Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program: Greater Fraud Prevention Controls are Needed*. The GAO found instances where LIHEAP benefits were given to ineligible individuals and identified areas where the program could be vulnerable to fraud. To address this serious issue, HHS has taken major steps to ensure LIHEAP program integrity. On May 5, 2010, HHS issued new guidance to the states regarding the provision of social security numbers by LIHEAP applicants as a condition for receipt of energy assistance. On June 8, 2010, HHS required states to supplement their FY 2011 LIHEAP plans with a Program Integrity Assessment. For more information and links to the GAO report and HHS memos, please read the LIHEAP Clearinghouse newsletter article, *HHS Releases Guidance on Program Integrity and Fraud Prevention* available at <http://www.liheap.ncat.org/newslett/7enews.htm>.

We will be getting back to you as more details become available regarding the House Appropriations spending bill and appropriations developments in the Senate.

Thank you for your strong support of the LIHEAP program.

Sincerely,

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