



News Release from

**U.S. REP. NANCY JOHNSON
U.S. REP. CHRISTOPHER SHAYS
U.S. REP. ROB SIMMONS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**JOHNSON, SHAYS, SIMMONS ANNOUNCE EARLY
RELEASE OF FEDERAL ENERGY ASSISTANCE FUNDS**

Funds will Reduce Heating Costs for Seniors, Low-Income Families

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Reps. Nancy Johnson, Christopher Shays and Rob Simmons today announced that \$6.1 million in federal energy assistance is on its way to help heat Connecticut homes this winter.

These critical federal funds, released today from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) contingency fund, will help reduce heating oil costs for Connecticut residents throughout the upcoming winter.

"No family should be forced to choose between heating their home and putting food on the table," said Johnson. "These funds will help alleviate the tremendous strain that skyrocketing energy costs place on families living on fixed incomes."

"This early funding will help maximize the state's purchasing power this winter," Shays said. "By releasing funding now, Connecticut can pre-purchase oil before colder temperatures come, when home heating oil becomes much more expensive. It will allow Connecticut consumers to get more for our money and I am grateful for this common-sense support for dealing with rising energy costs."

"As so many working families in Connecticut know, New England's winters can be cold and cruel. This year will be no different," Simmons said. "The good news is these LIHEAP dollars will benefit Connecticut's neediest families and seniors. Today's action by the White House will help working families struggling with record-high fuel prices keep warm this winter."

Reps. Johnson, Shays, and Simmons called on the President to release these funds early in order to increase the state's purchasing power this winter. Volatile crude oil prices, pipeline safety issues, and unpredictable weather all affect the price of home heating oil. By obtaining this \$6.1 million so early in the season, Connecticut will be able to purchase heating oil at lower prices, well before frigid winter weather substantially drives up costs.

The LIHEAP program helps low-income seniors, families with children, and individuals with disabilities afford their energy bills. This assistance has become increasingly important for cold weather states, which have seen a dramatic spike in home heating oil prices in recent years. In 2005 alone, millions of seniors and families experienced an average 23% increase in their heating bills.

Connecticut received \$43.2 million in LIHEAP assistance in Fiscal Year 2006.