

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 4, 2008

The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chairman
The Honorable Arlen Specter, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Specter:

Thank you for your support in the Consolidated Appropriations Act for increased funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). We appreciate your strong and consistent support for this program and respectfully request you provide the authorized \$5.1 billion for LIHEAP in fiscal year 2009. While we recognize that the Subcommittee will face difficult decisions in allocating resources, we believe this investment for low-income households is vital.

Many Americans are struggling under the burden of high energy prices. According to the Energy Information Administration, some households can expect to pay as much as 37 percent more to heat their homes during the 2007-2008 winter than during the 2006-2007 winter. LIHEAP protects public health and safety by helping low-income families cope with these high energy costs. In addition, the program helps low-income homeowners weatherize their homes to save energy and lower their energy burden. Weatherization, on average, reduces heating bills by 31 percent and overall energy bills by \$200 to \$250 per year.

LIHEAP funding not only helps families cope with higher heating prices; it also makes homes safer for children. According to the Children's Sentinel Nutrition Assessment Program (C-SNAP), babies and toddlers living in households that are inadequately heated are more likely to have developmental problems, be hospitalized, and be in overall worse health.

In FY 2008, LIHEAP appropriations totaled \$2.57 billion. The President's FY 2009 budget requests only \$2 billion for LIHEAP. This cut will force states to either lower benefit amounts, or assist less people; an estimate by the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association (NEADA) found that as many as 1.2 million households could be dropped from the program in response to such a funding cut. In the face of high energy prices and increasing shut-off rates, funding for LIHEAP should be increased, not decreased.

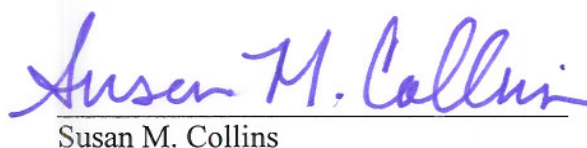
No family in our nation should be forced to choose between paying an energy bill and putting food on the table for themselves and their children. No senior citizen should have to decide between buying life-saving prescriptions and paying utility bills. For individuals and households that may have to face these difficult choices, LIHEAP makes a real difference in their ability to cope with adverse circumstances.

Your inclusion of \$5.1 billion in LIHEAP funding in the fiscal year 2009 budget would help qualified low-income households receive much needed LIHEAP assistance in the coming year. Thank you for considering this request.

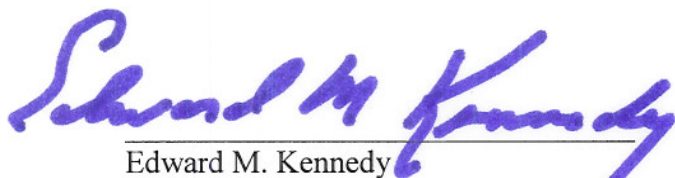
Sincerely,



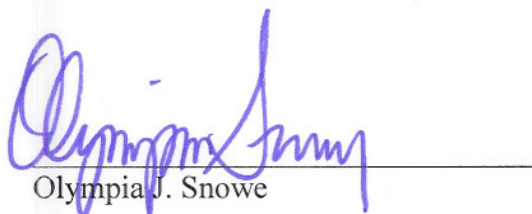
Jack Reed



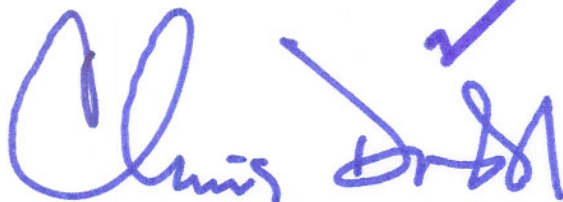
Susan M. Collins



Edward M. Kennedy



Olympia J. Snowe



Christopher J. Dodd



Norm Coleman



Richard J. Durbin



Richard G. Lugar



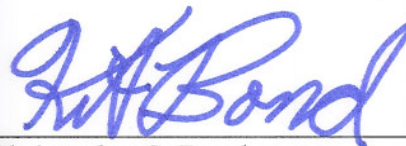
Bernard Sanders



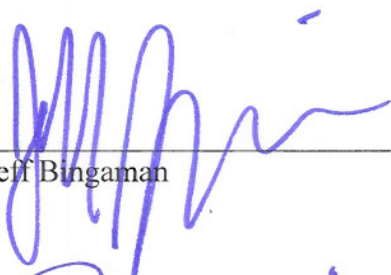
Lisa Murkowski



Barbara A. Mikulski



Christopher S. Bond



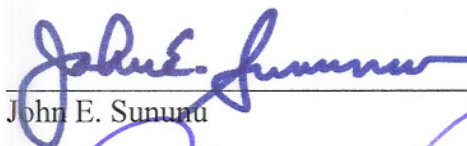
Jeff Bingaman



Gordon H. Smith



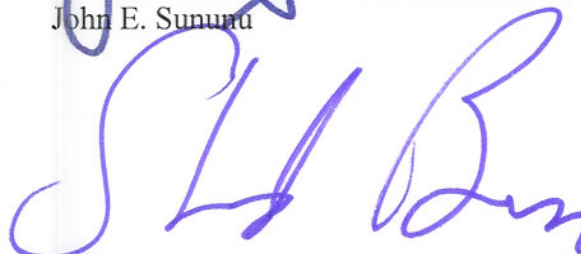
Barack Obama



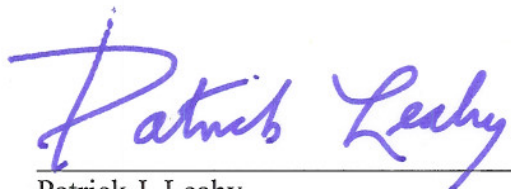
John E. Sununu



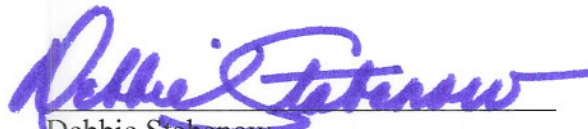
Hillary Rodham Clinton



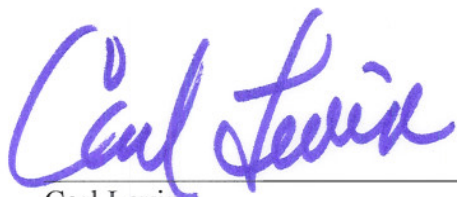
Sherrod Brown



Patrick J. Leahy



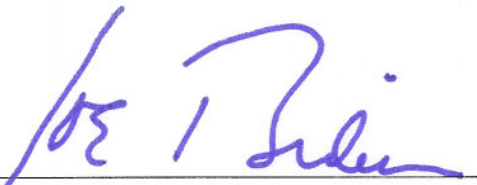
Debbie Stabenow



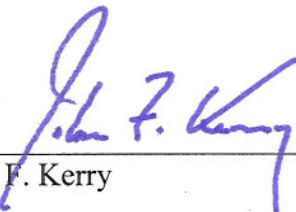
Carl Levin



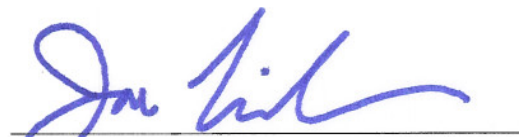
Herb Kohl



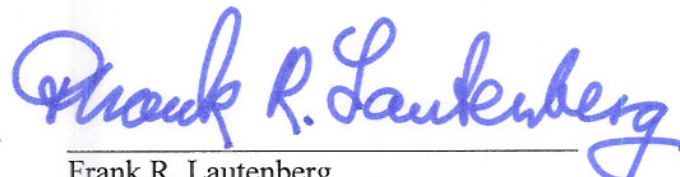
Joseph R. Biden, Jr.



John F. Kerry



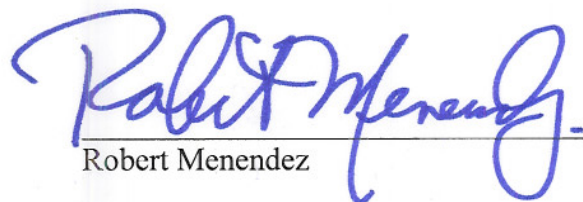
Joseph I. Lieberman




Frank R. Lautenberg



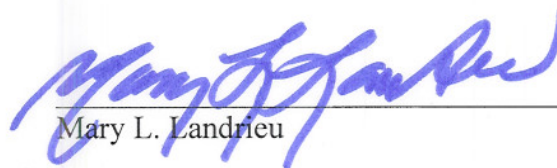
Sheldon Whitehouse



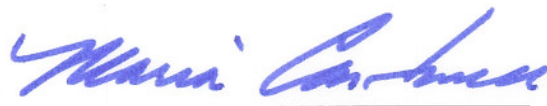
Robert Menendez



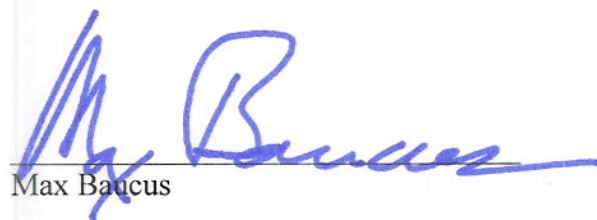
Benjamin L. Cardin




Mary L. Landrieu



Maria Cantwell



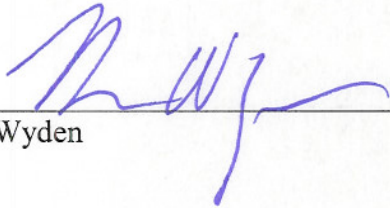
Max Baucus



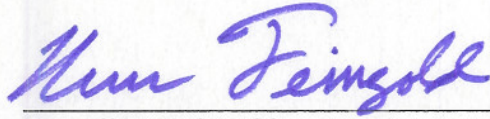
Mark L. Pryor




John D. Rockefeller, IV



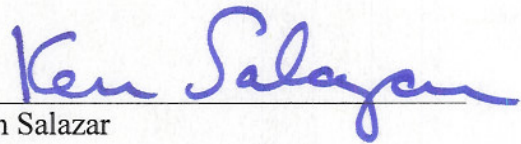
Ron Wyden



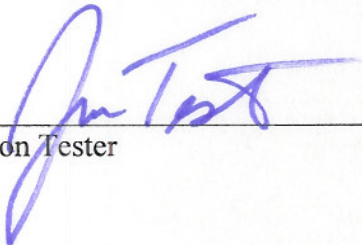
Russell D. Feingold



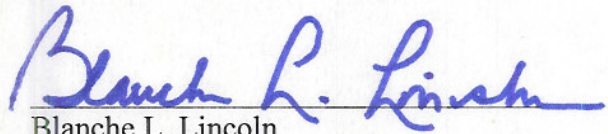
Clare McCaskill



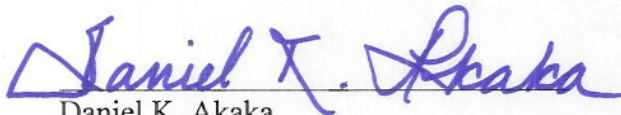
Ken Salazar



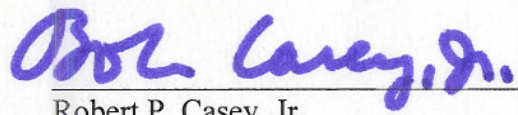
Jon Tester



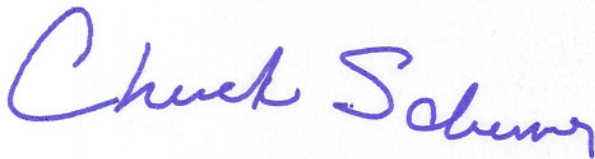
Blanche L. Lincoln



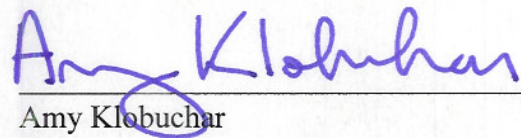
Daniel K. Akaka



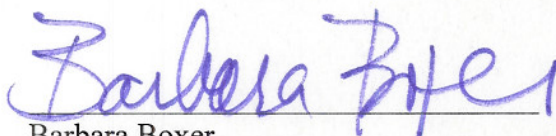
Robert P. Casey, Jr.



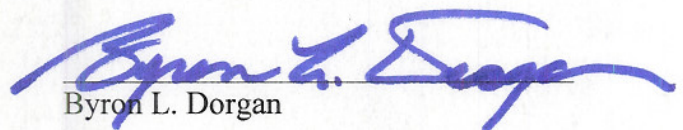
Charles E. Schumer



Amy Klobuchar



Barbara Boxer



Byron L. Dorgan