Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 4, 2025

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
Secretary of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

We write to you regarding the administration's decision to eliminate the entire staff responsible for administering the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

As you know, on April 1, 2025, approximately 10,000 employees at HHS received notice that they had been placed on administrative leave until June 2, 2025, after which their position would be terminated. These layoffs included the entirety of the team at the Office of Community Services within the Office of the Administration for Children and Families, which leads dozens of programs, including LIHEAP. It has been reported that these terminations were also a surprise to the state-level LIHEAP administrators who distribute the program's aid dollars to families in their communities.

This program is vital for millions of families, and in fact is oversubscribed. More than 25 million American households report foregoing food and medicine to pay their energy bills, and of those, 7 million households report that they face that decision every month.[1] LIHEAP benefits target households who need the assistance the most, particularly those that have a high home energy burden and or have household members who are elderly, disabled, and or young children. In Fiscal Year 2023, 2.1 million recipient households included an individual with a disability, 996,000 households included a young child, and 2.4 million households included an elderly adult.[2] The program is a lifeline for American families who struggle to heat their home in the winter and cool their homes in the summer.

Though the staff of 25 employees account for only a small fraction of the announced layoffs, they are responsible for administering billions of dollars each year to support millions of families across the nation in heating and cooling their homes. Each year, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, five U.S. territories, and about 150 tribes apply for funds through the HHS division that you have eliminated. In Fiscal Year 2023, nearly 6 million households received LIHEAP assistance, and LIHEAP restored power or prevented disconnections over 2.7 million times for

[1] https://www.npr.org/2018/09/19/649633468/31-percent-of-u-s-households-have-trouble-paying-energy-bills
[2] https://acf.gov/ocs/fact-sheet/liheap-fact-sheet

American families because the staff within the Office of Community Services processed each state and territory's application for funds.[3]

Moreover, LIHEAP supported 1.4 million households in crisis assistance.[4] This is not funding that can wait; a team must be in place to support this program's work. By removing the staff responsible for managing this vital program, this administration has directly burdened the families in our country who need our support most.

We are also concerned that without any federal employees working to support LIHEAP, there will be delays in the release of the remaining $378 million in the FY 25 appropriation for LIHEAP. These funds are needed to help provide assistance for families who fell behind on their winter heating bills due to unexpected emergencies, summer cooling to address extreme temperatures, and weatherization.

Gutting this program's staff is a reckless and irresponsible decision which may cost these families' lives. We urge you to immediately reverse this decision and do all you can to support the work of this vital program.

Sincerely,

Chris Pappas
Member of Congress

Angie Craig
Member of Congress

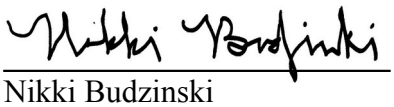
Jared Golden
Member of Congress

Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress

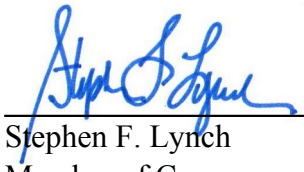
Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress

[3] https://acf.gov/ocs/fact-sheet/liheap-fact-sheet ; https://www.aga.org/natural-gas/affordable/liheap/#:~:text=LIHEAP%20restored%20power%20or%20prevented,families%20avoid%20dangerous%20heating%20practices.

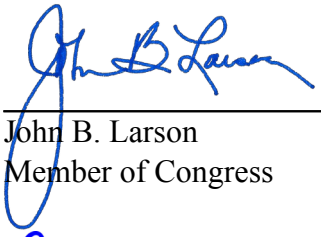
[4] https://acf.gov/ocs/fact-sheet/liheap-fact-sheet



Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress

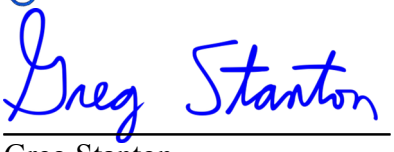


Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

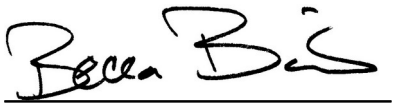


John B. Larson
Member of Congress

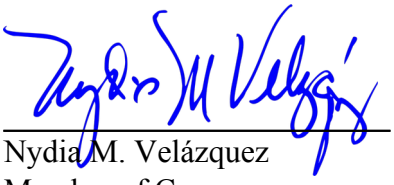
Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



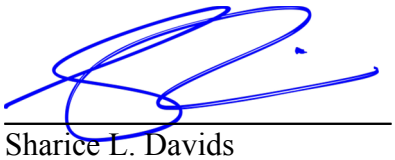
Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



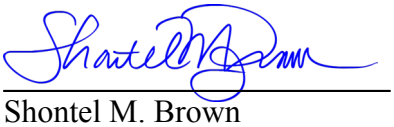
Becca Balint
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress



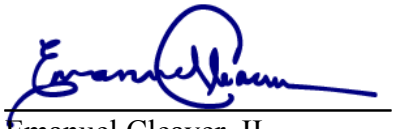
Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress

Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

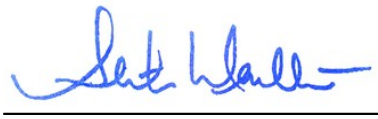
Paul Tonko
Member of Congress

Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress

Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

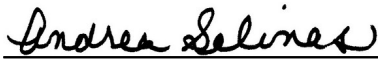


Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress

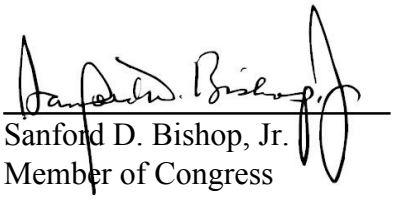
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress

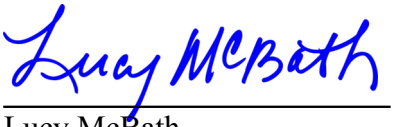
Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress

Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress

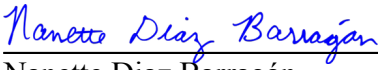


Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress

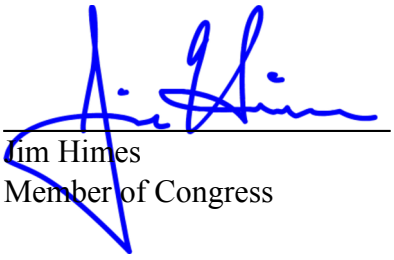
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Lucy McBath
Member of Congress



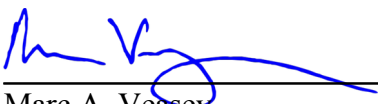
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Jim Himes
Member of Congress

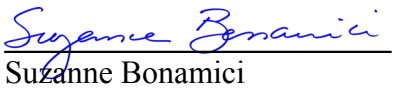
Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



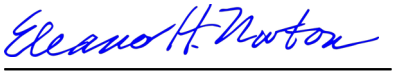
Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress

Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



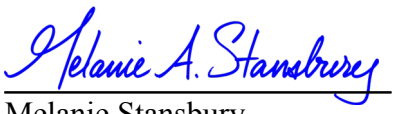
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

Patrick Ryan
Member of Congress

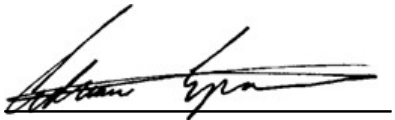


Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



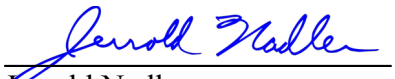
Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



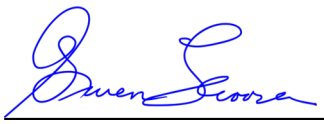
Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress

Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



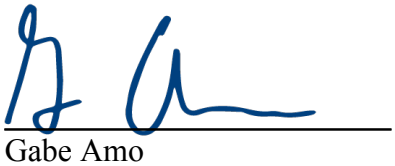
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



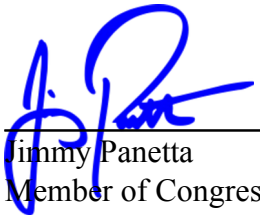
Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress

Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress

Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



Gabe Amo
Member of Congress

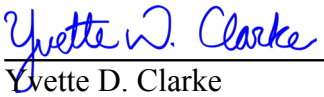


Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

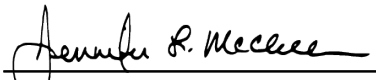
Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress

Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress

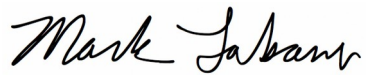


Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



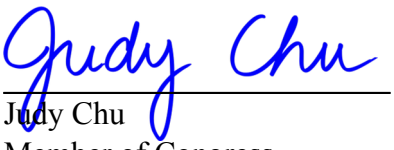
Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress

Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



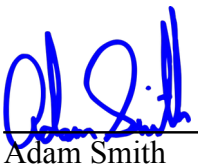
Mark Takano
Member of Congress

Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress



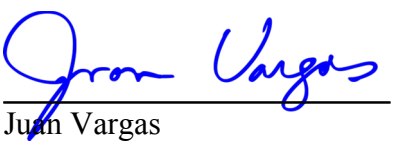
Judy Chu
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

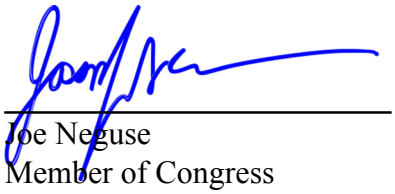


Adam Smith
Member of Congress

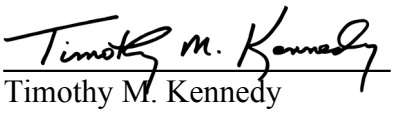
Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



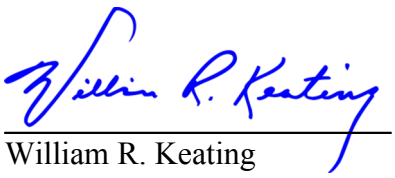
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress



Timothy M. Kennedy
Member of Congress

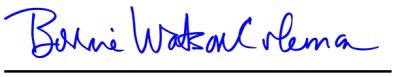


William R. Keating
Member of Congress

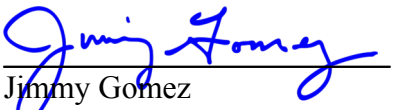
Derek T. Tran
Member of Congress

Dwight Evans
Member of Congress

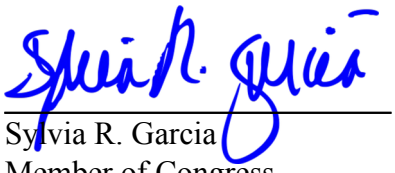
Valerie P. Foushee
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

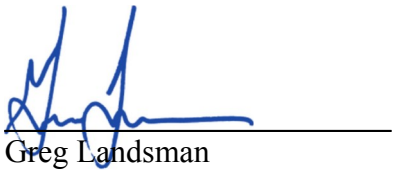


Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress

Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress



Greg Landsman
Member of Congress

Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress

Maggie Goodlander
Member of Congress

Josh Riley
Member of Congress

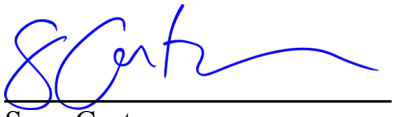
Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

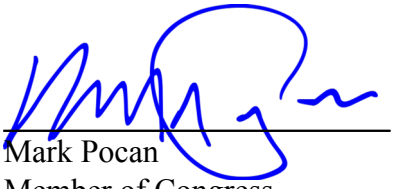
Mike Levin
Member of Congress

Dina Titus
Member of Congress

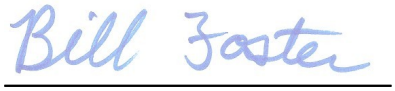
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress

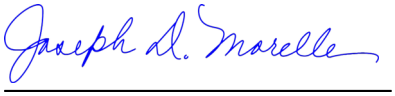


Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

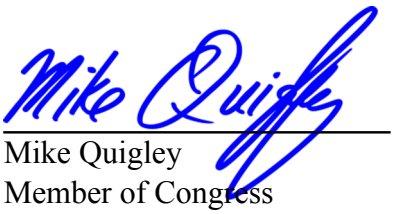


Bill Foster
Member of Congress

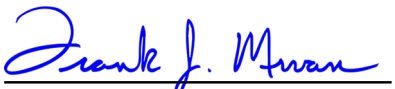
Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



Joseph D. Morelle
Member of Congress

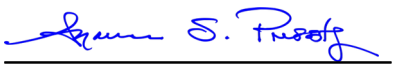


Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Frank J. Mrvan
Member of Congress

Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress