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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
READINESS
MILITARY PERSONNEL

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR
WORKFORCE PROTECTION
HEALTHY FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

www.shea-porter.house.gov

February 5, 2007

The Honorable John Spratt
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Spratt:

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Resolution, I urge you to reject the President's proposal to cut funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). I ask you to instead include a robust funding level for LIHEAP that will help families across the country as they face ever increasing home energy costs.

While Congress must live within its means, some programs are so crucial to the well-being of millions of people that they must be elevated to a higher priority. LIHEAP is one of these programs. Last year, Congress provided \$2.57 billion in funding for assistance with home energy costs. For Fiscal Year 2009, the President has proposed a funding level of \$2 billion including \$1.7 billion for formula grants and \$300 million in contingency funding. This \$570 million reduction comes at a time when millions of Americans are facing skyrocketing energy prices.

In New Hampshire, the average benefit for a recipient of LIHEAP funding in 2007 was \$533, while the average cost of heating a home was \$1,369. This year, those costs are continuing to rise dramatically. Since 2001, the cost of home heating fuel in New Hampshire has gone from \$1.55 per gallon to \$3.35 per gallon, forcing our most vulnerable citizens to choose between heating their homes and other necessities. No one should have to make such a choice.

The President's proposal would reduce assistance to New Hampshire families by over \$2 million. In a troubled economy, such a reduction, along with volatile oil prices, could put thousands of families in my state at serious risk next winter. I urge you to reject the President's proposal and to include a funding level for LIHEAP that will provide greater assistance to those most in need.

I look forward to working with you to ensure that we adopt a budget that makes the necessary investments in important programs such as LIHEAP. Thank you for your consideration and for all of the hard work you do for the American people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carol Shea-Porter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress