

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.

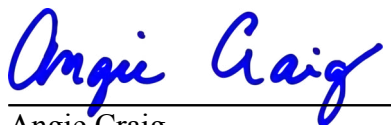
We are also concerned that without any federal employees working to support LIHEAP, there will be delays in the release of the remaining \$378 million in the FY 25 appropriation for LIHEAP. These funds are needed to help provide assistance for families who fell behind on their winter heating bills due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

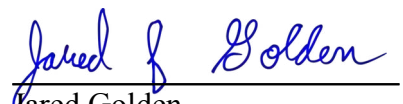
Sincerely,



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



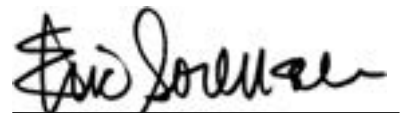
Angie Craig
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Jared Golden
Member of Congress



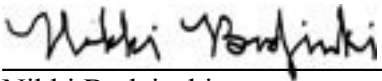
Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



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.>

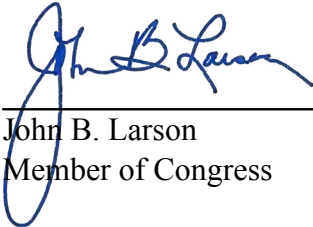
⁴ <https://acf.gov/ocs/fact-sheet/liheap-fact-sheet>



Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



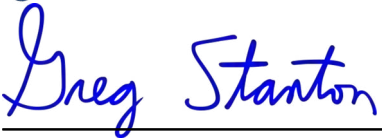
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



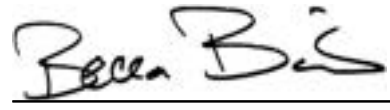
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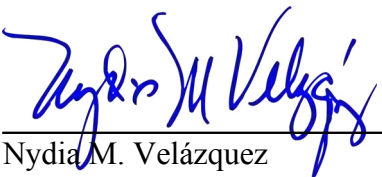
Mikie Sherrill
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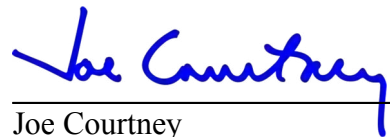
Nydia M. Velázquez
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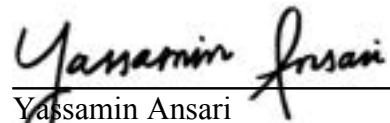
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Emanuel Cleaver, II
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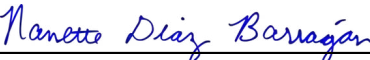
Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



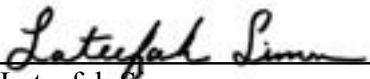
Delia C. Ramirez
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Rashida Tlaib
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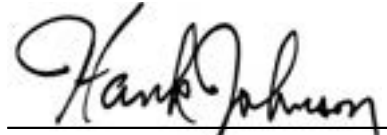
Nanette Diaz Barragán
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Lateefah Simon
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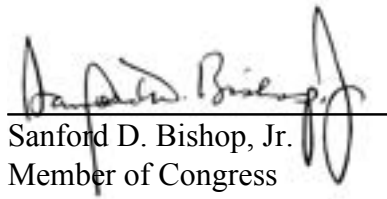
Marc A. Veasey
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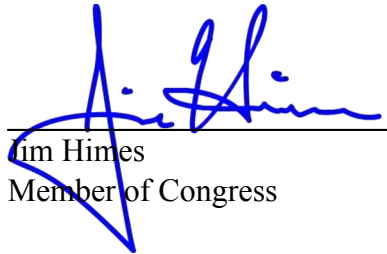
Jasmine Crockett
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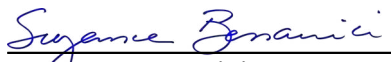
Jim Himes
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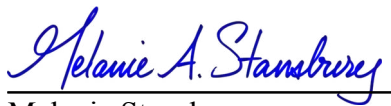
Terri A. Sewell
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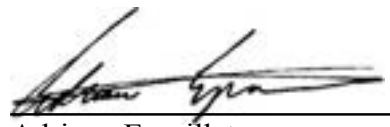

Suzanne Bonamici
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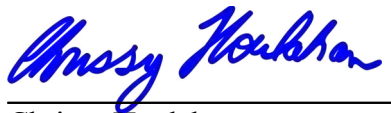

Patrick Ryan
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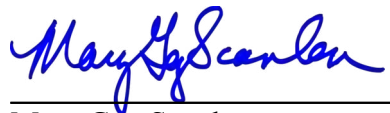

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

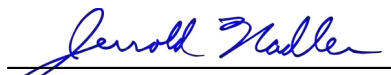

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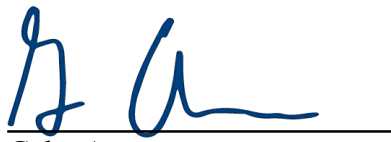

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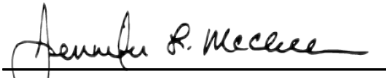
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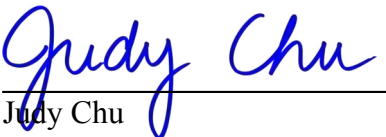
Salud Carbajal
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Mark Takano
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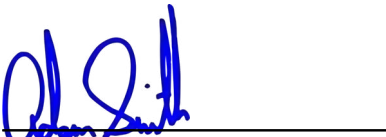
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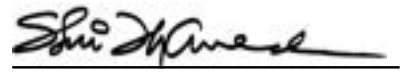
Judy Chu
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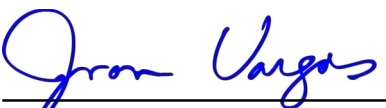
James P. McGovern
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Adam Smith
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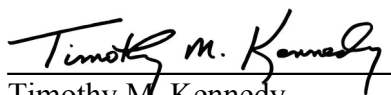
Shri Thanedar
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Juan Vargas
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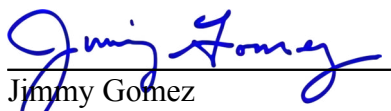


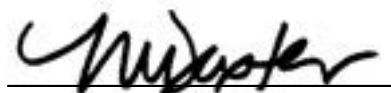
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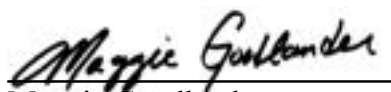

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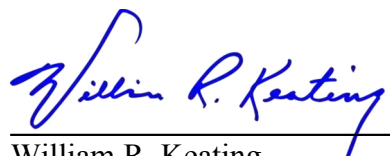

Valerie P. Foushee
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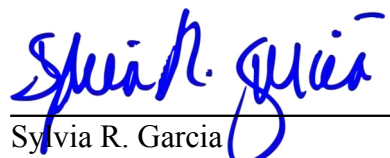

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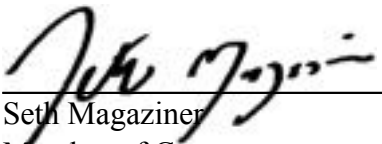

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Seth Magaziner
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Steve Cohen
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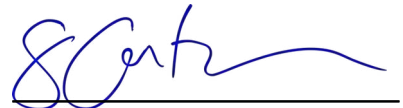
Mike Levin
Member of Congress



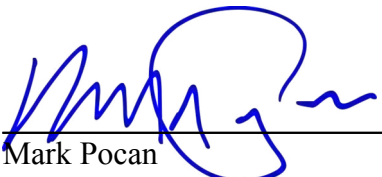
Dina Titus
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Chellie Pingree
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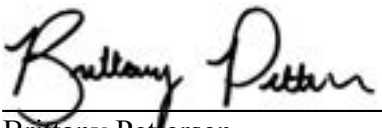
Sean Casten
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Mark Pocan
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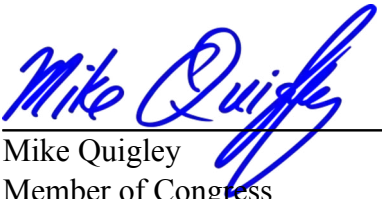
Bill Foster
Member of Congress



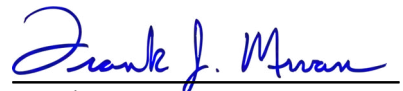
Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



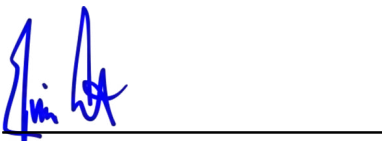
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Mike Quigley
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Frank J. Mrvan
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Jim Costa
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Ayanna Pressley
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Nikema Williams
Member of Congress