

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 33

BY SENATORS BROOME, ALARIO, APPEL, CROWE, MARTINY, MICHOT, SMITH  
AND THOMPSON

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To memorialize the Congress of the United States to sustain home energy assistance for at-risk Louisianians and to declare June 2011 as "Save LIHEAP" Month.

WHEREAS, the federal home energy assistance program is of vital interest to the state of Louisiana and to low to moderate income households, especially the elderly, disabled, or young citizens, who struggle disproportionately to afford heating and cooling costs; and

WHEREAS, Congress is considering the proposed budget to reduce the fiscal year 2012 Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) formula grant funding by fifty-seven percent nationally; and

WHEREAS, this reduction is disproportionately more damaging in Louisiana, triggering a sixty-seven percent loss, resulting in the life-threatening decrease of 34.7 million dollars to Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, due to the loss of these funds, tens of thousands of vulnerable Louisiana citizens will lose access to the LIHEAP's vital energy services; and

WHEREAS, more than four hundred and seventy-six thousand Louisiana households meet LIHEAP's stringent income eligibility requirements; and

WHEREAS, of these households, one hundred eighty-four thousand shelter someone over the age of sixty, ninety-six thousand are children under the age of six, and one hundred and fifty-four thousand are handicapped individuals, including disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, for a Louisiana family of four to be eligible for LIHEAP, the family must earn no more than twenty-seven dollars per day, per capita; and

WHEREAS, although nearly a half-million Louisiana households meet LIHEAP's federal income criteria, only a small fraction of eligible households are actually helped due to already limited federal funding; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana's ability to reach at-risk families through LIHEAP is entirely dependent upon the provision of adequate funding from Congress; and

WHEREAS, home energy assistance is particularly important in Louisiana due to intermittent intense heat and humidity, which is especially threatening to the elderly, disabled, and young citizens; and

WHEREAS, if the program's core block grants were reduced as proposed, Louisianians would be disproportionately affected, because the national program would be statutorily precluded from considering current population, poverty, and energy price data and mirroring outdated needs of twenty-five years ago; and

WHEREAS, unless Congress sustains LIHEAP, Louisiana's most vulnerable citizens will be placed at an unnecessarily greater risk.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Legislature hereby declares June, 2011 to be "Save LIHEAP Month" and encourages public and private citizens to join in by encouraging their respective congressional delegation to sustain this vital program at its long-standing national appropriation of five point one billion dollars during federal Fiscal Year 2012.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana hereby memorializes the Congress of the United States to sustain home energy assistance for at-risk Louisianians and to declare June 2011 as "Save LIHEAP" Month.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted to the secretary of the United States Senate and the clerk of the United States House of Representatives and to each member of the Louisiana delegation to the United States Congress.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES