

Reps. Espinoza, Plakas, Alma Smith, Kathleen Law, Lipsey, Bieda, Kolb, Wojno, Condino, Brown, Anderson, Leland, Accavitti, Adamini, Byrnes, Byrum, Clack, Clemente, Dillon, Donigan, Emmons, Farrah, Gillard, Gleason, Gonzales, Hildenbrand, Hood, Hopgood, Hummel, Lemmons, III, Lemmons, Jr., Mayes, McDowell, Meisner, Miller, Mortimer, Palsrok, Pearce, Polidori, Sak, Sheltroun, Virgil Smith, Spade, Taub, Tobocman, Vagnozzi, Waters, Zelenko and Angerer offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 189.

A resolution to memorialize the Congress and the President of the United States to provide full funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Whereas, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps ensure that all households receive basic utility services, which are vital to the health and safety of all Americans. If sufficiently well funded, LIHEAP has the capacity to provide heating assistance to low income families, including the working poor, senior citizens, and Americans with disabilities; and

Whereas, Michigan's severely constrained budget, unprecedented poverty, and rising energy prices are overwhelming the capabilities of religious, nonprofit, voluntary, and other community-based organizations in the state to satisfactorily help eligible citizens heat their homes; and

Whereas, Last year, for the first time in the state's history, Michigan had to shut down its LIHEAP program due to a lack of funds. More than 400,000 households were compelled to seek LIHEAP assistance in Michigan through September of 2005. This is an increase of about 7 percent over the same time last year; and

Whereas, A national 2004 survey of LIHEAP recipients revealed that families unable to pay their energy bills were compelled to cut food, medicine, and basic necessities in order to warm their homes. Additionally, a national 2003 survey found that LIHEAP makes an essential difference to citizens in dire need. LIHEAP enabled 62 percent of eligible families to restore utility services, 54 percent of LIHEAP households to subsist at safe and healthy temperatures, and 48 percent of recipients to avoid shutoff ; and

Whereas, LIHEAP assists qualified low income citizens to meet their bill payment obligations through arrearage forgiveness and bill reductions to more affordable levels. LIHEAP also helps to minimize service terminations; enables qualified households to avoid greater reliance upon more expensive government services, like Medicare and Medicaid; and accelerates the transition to economic self-reliance. The program also advances America's overall energy efficiency by weatherizing homes, repairing defective equipment, and reducing energy usage; and

Whereas, Natural gas prices—nationally and in Michigan this year—have increased significantly. Consumers are seeing these increases reflected in much higher monthly bills this winter; and

Whereas, The National Fuels Funds Network and other groups have petitioned the Bush Administration to release the remaining \$50 million in emergency funding authorized for FY 2005 and to increase LIHEAP funding to at least \$3.0 billion in fiscal year 2006; and

Whereas, The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), the American Association of Blacks in Energy, the Southern Governors Association, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, the Southern Legislative Conference, the National Conference of Black Mayors, together with many other groups, have all called upon Congress to increase its financial commitment to the LIHEAP program; and

Whereas, The national Energy Policy Act of 2005 authorizes \$5.1 billion for LIHEAP in fiscal year 2006; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we memorialize the Congress and the President of the United States to provide full funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Office of President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.