

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 11, 2018

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Ave. S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar,

Now that Congress has passed an omnibus funding bill for the entire 2018 fiscal year (FY2018), we write to ask that you immediately release the remaining ten percent of the funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

LIHEAP is wildly successful and vitally important to millions of families across the country and hundreds of thousands in our state of Massachusetts. This program directly helps the neediest and most vulnerable families.

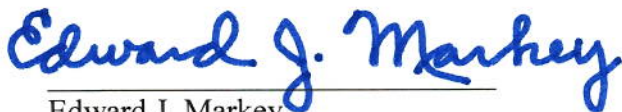
According to a Congressional Research Service (CRS) review of the most recent publicly available data from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), roughly 33 percent of households receiving LIHEAP assistance had at least one member 60 years of age or older, and 38 percent of households had at least one member with a disability. Nineteen percent of households included at least one child five years of age or younger. Additionally, an estimated 76 percent of households receiving heating assistance had incomes at or below the poverty level.

According to the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association (NEADA), these trends continue to persist. NEADA data shows that 70 percent of households receiving LIHEAP assistance in FY2016 had at least one member who is elderly, disabled, or a young child.

The Department of Health and Human Services released \$3.03 billion of FY 2018 funding to LIHEAP grantees on October 20, 2017. Now that Congress has passed a funding bill for the entire fiscal year and increased funding for the program by \$250 million, there is no reason why the rest of the LIHEAP funding should not be released immediately. We therefore request that you take immediate action to release this year's remaining LIHEAP funding.

We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
U.S. Senator



Elizabeth Warren
U.S. Senator