

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 24, 2023

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As much of the southern United States faces ongoing extreme heat, we respectfully request that you consider and pass an emergency supplemental funding package for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). This supplemental funding for LIHEAP will provide states with the resources they need to help families pay their electricity bills and stay cool during these extremely high temperatures.

A heat wave beginning in June of 2023 has caused record breaking temperatures across large parts of the southern U.S., including Texas, as well as parts of Arizona, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Alabama, California, Florida, New Mexico and Mississippi.¹ This dangerous heat has caused a spike in emergency room visits for heat-related illnesses, and at least 14 people have died in Texas and Louisiana due to the extreme heat.² Forecasts continue to predict dangerous and extreme temperatures across the South and Southwest.³

During these dangerous heat events, people rely on their air conditioning, but the cost of staying cool continues to rise. Average monthly electricity bills increased 13 percent in 2022⁴, and electricity bills this summer are expected to be another 2 percent more than last summer.⁵ During heat waves, increased demand can further raise these prices for consumers.

Without assistance from LIHEAP, many vulnerable individuals and families impacted by heat waves may miss utility payments, which leads to financial strain and even having their power disconnected. In 2022, at least 3 million customers were disconnected from power due to a missed payment, with 30 percent of these disconnections taking place during the summer.⁶ Less than half of states in the U.S. have protections for customers facing utility disconnections during high heat, leaving millions of Americans in dangerous conditions.⁷

¹ The Hill, June 26, 2023; <https://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/4068349-seven-states-face-extreme-temperatures-as-texas-heat-wave-expands/>

² AP News, June 28, 2023; <https://apnews.com/article/heat-deaths-dome-texas-california-south-d820a8782d3bc15abbe713af81dc7d7f>

³ The New York Times, July 14, 2023; <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/us/heat-wave-map-tracker.html>

⁴ U.S. Energy Information Administration, May 31, 2023; <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=56660#:~:text=In%202022%2C%20the%20average%20U.S.,in%20residential%20retail%20electricity%20prices>

⁵ U.S. Energy Information Administration, May 9, 2023; <https://www.eia.gov/outlooks/steo/report/BTL/2023/05-electricitybills/article.php>

⁶ CNN, July 11, 2023; <https://www.cnn.com/2023/07/11/business/heat-waves-power-shutoffs/index.html>

⁷ Pennsylvania Capital-Star, July 6, 2023; <https://www.penncapital-star.com/energy-environment/in-31-states-utilities-can-shut-off-electricity-for-nonpayment-in-a-heat-wave-analysis/>

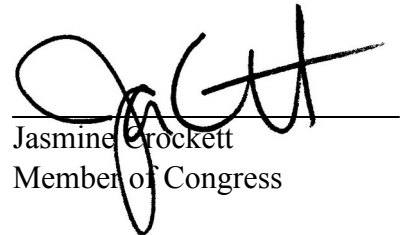
As forecasts continue to predict dangerous heat, we must ensure families and individuals are getting the assistance they need to stay cool. Since LIHEAP was originally created to address cold weather conditions, the allocation of funds leaves many warmer states and their most vulnerable communities well below the national average in funding.⁸ To prevent vulnerable families and individuals from missing electricity payments due to this high heat, we respectfully request that you pass emergency supplemental funding for LIHEAP.

By providing this emergency funding, Congress can assist the tens of millions of Americans across the South and Southwest who are experiencing deadly, record-breaking heat. Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to continuing working with you to address this critical need.

Sincerely,



Colin Z. Allred
Member of Congress



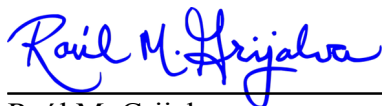
Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



Terri A. Sewell
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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

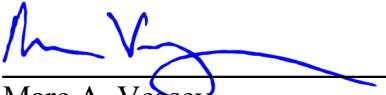


Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress

⁸ CRS, May 2, 2019; <https://www.crs.gov/Reports/RL33275?source=search>



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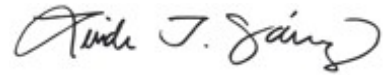
Grace F. Napolitano
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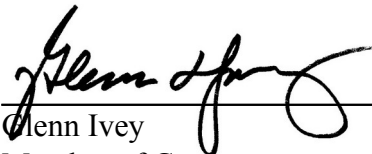
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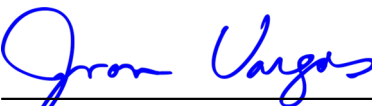
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Glenn Ivey
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Ro Khanna
Member of Congress
Ranking Member,
Subcommittee on Cyber,
Information Technologies,
and Innovation



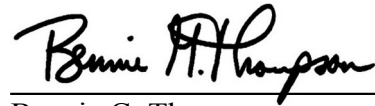
Juan Vargas
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Robert Garcia
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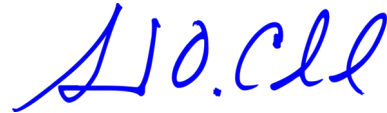
Gabe Vasquez
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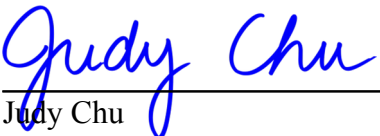
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