Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

September 7, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Boehner and Minority Leader Pelosi,

We understand that you are all facing difficult decisions as we near the end of the fiscal year. However, we are writing today in support of the Low Income Home Energy Heating Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and to express our sincere hope that level funding for this critical program can be maintained. Rising costs for home heating oil make it even more important that this vital program not be subject to draconian cuts.

The Fiscal Year 2012 budget proposal submitted by the administration earlier this year cut LIHEAP by almost half to $2.57 billion. We respectfully request that as you negotiate any short-term Continuing Resolution or any final appropriations bills for Fiscal Year 2012 you maintain full funding of LIHEAP at $5.1 billion.

As we head into the fall, and winter seasons we must think about the neediest families, children and seniors. Recent reports show that Massachusetts will face record high oil prices - in August home heating oil was sold at an average of $3.73 a gallon in Massachusetts. That is 31 cents above the national average. In this weakened economy, too many Massachusetts families simply do not have the resources to cover this increase in cost – and no family should have to choose between food and heating their homes.

We all understand that an increase in LIHEAP funding this year is likely impossible given the budget constraints included in the new law to extend the debt limit. We will do our part and continue to work as a delegation to try and find appropriate ways to help keep oil costs low and increase energy efficiency. By maintaining level funding we can at least avoid a catastrophic winter and ensure that many families get the support they need.

We again request that you maintain you maintain full funding of LIHEAP at $5.1 billion in any short-term Continuing Resolution or appropriations bills for Fiscal Year 2012 and provide vital heating assistance to those in Massachusetts and across the country. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John F. Kerry
United States Senator

Scott P. Brown
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey
Member of Congress

Barney Frank
Member of Congress

Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress

John W. Olver
Member of Congress

John F. Tierney
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Michael Capuano
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress

William R. Keating
Member of Congress