

**NATIONAL BLACK CAUCUS OF STATE LEGISLATORS
RESOLUTION 05-301**

**Supporting the Adequate Funding of the Low Income
Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**

WHEREAS, The National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) supports the principles of the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), as adequate utility services are vital to the health and safety of American households; and

WHEREAS, Severely constrained state budgets, unprecedented poverty and rising energy prices are overwhelming the capabilities of faith, nonprofit, voluntary, and other community-based organizations to satisfactorily help eligible citizens' heat and cool their homes; and

WHEREAS, State LIHEAP administrators report applications for energy assistance have increased by 5.3 percent in late 2004, over the same time last year; and

WHEREAS, For the first time in more than a decade, more than five million households were compelled to seek LIHEAP assistance; and

WHEREAS, LIHEAP would need to be funded at a higher level to recover the purchasing power it had in the early 1980s; and

WHEREAS, LIHEAP provides vital heating and cooling assistance to low-income families, including working poor, senior citizens, and Americans with disabilities; 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 or cool their homes; and

WHEREAS, A national 2003 survey of LIHEAP recipients found that LIHEAP makes an essential difference to citizens in dire need LIHEAP enabled:

62% of eligible families to restore utility services;
54% of LIHEAP households to subsist at safe and healthy temperatures; and
48% of recipients to avoid disconnection; and

WHEREAS, LIHEAP assists qualified low-income citizens to meet their bill payment obligations through arrearage forgiveness, and bill reductions to more affordable levels; and

WHEREAS, LIHEAP also helps to minimize service terminations, enables qualified households to avoid greater reliance upon other government services, and accelerates the transition economic self-reliance; and

WHEREAS, The program also advances America's overall energy efficiency by weatherizing homes, repairing defective heating equipment, and reduce energy usage; and

WHEREAS, The Energy Information Administration's latest Short-Term Energy Outlook finds that portions of the country are experiencing substantially higher home energy costs (e.g., 34 % higher heating oil, 20% higher propane and 10% higher natural gas prices); and

WHEREAS, The National Fuel Funds Network and other groups have petitioned the Administration to release the remaining \$50 million in Emergency funding authorized for FY 2005 be released and that LIHEAP funding be increased to \$3.0 billion in fiscal year 2006; and

WHEREAS, Insufficient LIHEAP funding undermines and threatens state and local initiatives that need federal support to provide energy security for working poor, elderly and disabled Americans;

WHEREAS, the AARP, American Association of Blacks in Energy, the Southern Governors' Association, the National Conference of Black Mayors, among other groups has endorsed LIHEAP legislation calling on Congress to fully commit itself to the LIHEAP program; and

WHEREAS, the newly enacted Energy Bill authorizes \$5.1 billion for LIHEAP in FY2006;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the **National Black Caucus of State Legislators meeting in Executive Session, August 18, 2005, in Seattle, Washington**, urges the Federal government to release the remaining \$50 million in Emergency LIHEAP funds for FY 2005 to help supplement the funds available to assist states during the upcoming warm weather months; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the NBCSL urges Congress to appropriate LIHEAP funds of \$5.1 billion in the FY 2006 budget.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, That this resolution be dispatched to the President of the United States, Members of Congress, House and Senate Leadership and other appropriate elected officials.

Sponsored by: Representative Senfronia Thompson (TX); Representative William Crawford (IN); Senator Bettye Davis (AK)

Committee of Jurisdiction: Energy

Certified by Committee Chair: Representative Senfronia Thompson (TX))

Certification Date is: August 17, 2005

Ratified in Executive Session: August 18, 2005

Ratification is certified by: Representative Mary H. Coleman (MS), President

