



Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel

December 16, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer, Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Helping People by Maximizing Funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McCarthy,

I hope you and your colleagues are well. *I urge Congress to maximize funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) for fiscal year 2022 and in any other supplemental way.* The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) is the State of Ohio agency representing Ohio residential utility consumers.

HEAP funds can help so many people in Ohio and the country who are unable to afford their utility bills and are desperate for money, especially during the pandemic. The need to help others is so great with the press of poverty, food insecurity, healthcare costs, the potential for homelessness, and utility disconnections, among other things. Please maximize HEAP funding to help Ohioans and Americans stay connected to utilities for heating and other essentials. (In this regard, we support use of HEAP funds in Ohio for utility bill payment assistance, and not for the lesser priority of weatherization.)

Our National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates adopted a resolution earlier this year emphasizing, among other things, the need for more HEAP funding to help people during the pandemic. <https://www.nasuca.org/nwp/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020-01-NASUCA-COVID-19-Policy-Resolution-Final-5-12-20-.pdf> The National Energy & Utility Affordability Coalition, in its support of maximizing HEAP funding, has described the many benefits of HEAP for at-risk consumers. Here is a link: <https://neuac.org/neuac-advocacy/?vvsrsrc=%2fPetitions%2f2341%2fRespond>

I thank you for the past support of Congress for HEAP funding. And I urge you to fund HEAP at the maximum level. Stay well.

Sincerely,

Bruce Weston, Agency Director
Ohio Consumers' Counsel

cc: The Honorable Richard Shelby
The Honorable Sherrod Brown
The Honorable Rob Portman
The Honorable David Joyce

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
The Honorable Nita Lowey
The Honorable Tim Ryan