

Rep. Schuitmaker offered the following resolution.

House Resolution No. 182.

A resolution to memorialize the Congress and the President of the United States to increase funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

Whereas, Many indicators predict home heating costs this winter will be excessively high. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have disrupted the energy infrastructure of our nation and natural gas, electric, and heating oil prices are expected to spike. The cost of natural gas in Michigan may exceed \$13.00 per thousand cubic feet by January 2006. In states like Michigan, where the winters are typically long, cold, and bitter, residents are expecting home heating bills to be approximately 50 percent higher than they were last year; and

Whereas, The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is the most crucial energy assistance program in the country. LIHEAP, a federal block grant program, provides the bulk of funding for energy assistance programs in almost every state and has been doing so for almost 25 years. LIHEAP helps the elderly, people with disabilities, families with young children, and the working poor. LIHEAP prevents people from having to choose between heating their homes and buying food and medicines for themselves or their families; and

Whereas, The LIHEAP program has been struggling to keep pace with the number of households requiring help. Rising poverty, an aging population, increased heating costs, and decreased funding levels have placed a strain on the LIHEAP program the past few years. Last year, for the first time ever, Michigan had to close their LIHEAP program for 4 months due to a lack of funds, and still Michigan is currently receiving a smaller LIHEAP allocation than last year; and

Whereas, State energy assistance programs are expecting to see a surge of LIHEAP applications this winter heating season. Skyrocketing home heating costs and the many economic challenges threatening Michigan and other states will cause more families to seek help. However, the current level of LIHEAP funding will only provide enough funds to help a fraction of those eligible for assistance; and

Whereas, Immediately including emergency LIHEAP funds in the next available appropriations bill and significantly increasing fiscal year 2006 LIHEAP funding will ensure that energy assistance is available for all those in need. The additional funds will allow families in Michigan and across the country to meet their basic energy needs and avoid crisis; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we memorialize the Congress and the President of the United States to increase funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP); and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Office of President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.