

Rep. Darany offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 34.

A resolution to urge the President and Congress of the United States to maintain federal funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Whereas, The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is America's primary means of helping needy families pay for heating fuel to keep warm in the winter. 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 nearly 30 years. LIHEAP helps the elderly, people with disabilities, families with young children, the unemployed, and the working poor. LIHEAP prevents people from having to choose between heating their homes and buying food and medication for themselves or their families; and

Whereas, As the ranks of the unemployed have swelled and the number of Americans living in poverty has increased, the LIHEAP program has become even more important. According to the United States Census Bureau, the nation's official poverty rate in 2009 was 14.3 percent, up from 13.2 percent in 2008. Many of the more than forty million Americans living in poverty come from Michigan and other Midwest and Northeast states. Many of the poor and needy in these cold weather regions face difficulty in paying their energy bills. When the temperature falls below zero, staying warm becomes a matter of life and death, and LIHEAP assistance becomes imperative; and

Whereas, This valuable and essential program should be maintained without pause. LIHEAP funding ensures that energy assistance is available to those in need, allowing families in Michigan and across the country to meet their basic energy needs. For nearly 30 years, despite the economic situation, the President and the Congress have realized the value of LIHEAP and funded this essential program. Now is not the time to eliminate or de-fund LIHEAP, just as the country is beginning to recover from one of the deepest recessions this country has faced; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we urge the President and Congress of the United States to maintain federal funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the 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.