
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 394 Session of
2000

INTRODUCED BY HENNESSEY, ADOLPH, ARGALL, BAKER, BARD, BELARDI, BELFANTI, BROWNE, CAWLEY, CIVERA, L. I. COHEN, M. COHEN, COLAFELLA, CORRIGAN, COSTA, CURRY, DAILEY, DALLY, DeWEESE, FARGO, FEESE, FICHTER, FLICK, GEIST, GODSHALL, GORDNER, GRUCELA, HALUSKA, HARHAI, HARHART, HERMAN, HERSHEY, JOSEPHS, KIRKLAND, KREBS, LEDERER, LUCYK, MAJOR, MANDERINO, MARKOSEK, MARSICO, MAYERNIK, McCALL, McILHATTAN, McNAUGHTON, MELIO, MICOZZIE, R. MILLER, MUNDY, ORIE, PESCI, PETRARCA, PETRONE, PIPPY, RAYMOND, READSHAW, ROSS, RUBLEY, SATHER, SAYLOR, SCHRODER, SCRIMENTI, SEYFERT, SHANER, B. SMITH, STABACK, STERN, STURLA, SURRA, TANGRETTI, E. Z. TAYLOR, THOMAS, TIGUE, TRAVAGLIO, TRELLO, TRUE, WALKO, WILLIAMS, WILT, WOGAN, WRIGHT AND YUDICHAK, MARCH 14, 2000

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON RULES, MARCH 14, 2000

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Department of Public Welfare to increase the cap on
2 energy crisis grant funding assistance for the Low-Income
3 Home Energy Assistance Program.

4 WHEREAS, The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program
5 (LIHEAP) is a vital lifeline to low-income families, working
6 poor households, senior citizens and persons with disabilities
7 in meeting their energy needs; and

8 WHEREAS, Low-income families, the elderly and many working
9 poor Pennsylvanians face a continuing energy crisis with energy
10 burdens that well exceed 15% of their household incomes; and

11 WHEREAS, LIHEAP is a targeted block grant program which
12 provides built-in flexibility in Federal-State partnerships and
13 is the foundation for many programs authorized by state public

1 utility commissions and many gas and electric companies and
2 community service organizations which assist low-income
3 customers to:

4 (1) Meet their bill payment obligations through direct
5 assistance, arrearage forgiveness and reduction of bills to
6 more affordable levels.

7 (2) Prevent service terminations in winter as well as
8 during heat emergencies.

9 (3) Help keep working poor households self-sustaining.

10 (4) Help households make the transition from public
11 assistance.

12 (5) Weatherize homes, to repair defective heating
13 equipment and to reduce usage;

14 and

15 WHEREAS, The average wholesale price of home heating oil in
16 the East Coast for February 2000 is more than 351.4% higher than
17 in February 1999; and

18 WHEREAS, While the per-gallon price of home heating oil can
19 be expected to rise in winter, that rise has historically been
20 no more than 1/2¢ per day; and

21 WHEREAS, Local oil distributors in this Commonwealth
22 experienced a price increase of more than 18¢ per gallon in one
23 day during the week ending January 22, 2000; and

24 WHEREAS, Oil companies claim they are reducing production and
25 keeping inventories low to reduce their costs, and the
26 Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries ministers on
27 January 14, 2000, voted to continue current restrictions through
28 March 2000, pushing the price of a barrel of crude oil above \$30
29 for the first time in nine years; and

30 WHEREAS, The average price of residential home heating oil in

1 the East Coast for the week of February 14, 2000, was \$1.95,
2 marking an increase of 123% from February 1999, and news reports
3 are forecasting a continuation of higher prices well into the
4 next fiscal year; and

5 WHEREAS, The Department of Public Welfare maintains
6 jurisdiction over the administration of LIHEAP and the
7 allocation of Federal funds and must reserve up to 10% of
8 Federal LIHEAP funds for energy crisis assistance; and

9 WHEREAS, Many low-income Pennsylvanians have arrived at the
10 \$250 cap for the LIHEAP energy crisis assistance component and
11 are still experiencing a crisis in paying home energy bills due
12 to the increased price of home heating oil; and

13 WHEREAS, The Federal Government released:

14 (1) \$45 million in LIHEAP emergency funds to Alaska and
15 ten northeastern and Middle Atlantic States, including
16 Pennsylvania, on January 25, 2000;

17 (2) \$130 million in emergency LIHEAP funding on February
18 10, 2000; and

19 (3) \$120 million in emergency funds on February 16,
20 2000;

21 and

22 WHEREAS, The Department of Public Welfare initially received
23 \$2,509,882 of the \$45 million LIHEAP emergency funds to benefit
24 an additional 713,392 low-income households in this Commonwealth
25 and will receive an estimated \$25 million with the second and
26 third release of Federal LIHEAP emergency funding; therefore be
27 it

28 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives urge the
29 Department of Public Welfare to utilize the designated
30 \$2,509,882 and any further supplemental Federal LIHEAP emergency

- 1 funding to increase the \$250 cap on the LIHEAP energy crisis
- 2 grant component to provide additional relief to low-income
- 3 families in this Commonwealth.