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KENNEDY, KERRY ANNOUNCE \$82 MILLION IN HEATING AID FOR MASSACHUSETTS FAMILIES

WASHINGTON, DC – Senators Edward M. Kennedy and John F. Kerry today announced that Massachusetts low-income households will receive \$82 million in fuel aid as part of the Omnibus Appropriations bill currently before Congress. The amount is enough to assist 95,000 families throughout the Commonwealth who are feeling the economic effects of increased oil prices.

Senator Kennedy said, "These funds will help families most in need in Massachusetts, so they won't have to choose between heating their home, putting food on their table, seeking health care for their children, or obtaining other necessities this winter. No family should have to face such impossible choices. This assistance will have a direct, positive effect on tens of thousands of our citizens who need our help the most."

"As the weather in Massachusetts gets colder and colder, no one should worry about where their next meal is coming from or go without medical care just so they can heat their homes," said Senator Kerry. "LIHEAP is a commonsense solution to this very real problem. This funding will save thousands of Massachusetts families from being left out in the cold."

The Omnibus Appropriations bill includes \$2.6 billion for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which is \$409 million above the level provided in 2007. The Administration had proposed to cut LIHEAP by \$379 million.

Of the funds provided in the bill, \$2 billion will be immediately available to states as a block grant. The remaining funds are reserve funds available at the President's discretion to respond to an energy emergency. Of the block grant assistance, Massachusetts will receive \$82 million to help families with their home heating costs this winter.

The bill is currently being debated in the House of Representatives and it's expected to be approved there this evening. It will then be considered by the Senate.

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