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KENNEDY APPLAUDS LIHEAP FUNDING INCREASE

WASHINGTON, DC— Today, Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, released the following statement in response to the Senate passage of \$5.1 billion in LIHEAP funding, which increases the formula allotment for Massachusetts to \$154 million. This funding level will provide an average benefit of \$490 to over 300,000 households in the Commonwealth.

"I'm thrilled that the Senate voted to fully fund LIHEAP, which provides essential heating assistance to low-income families. This vote is a strong rejection of the White House's plan to cut fuel assistance and it nearly doubles the budgeted amount of assistance for Massachusetts families next year. Rising energy prices force families to make impossible choices between heating their homes or feeding their children or buying essential medicines, so it's vital that we provide the relief they need."

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