



***Resolution Supporting Adequate Funding of  
the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)***

**WHEREAS**, the Florida Council on Aging recognizes utility service to be a vital key to the health, safety and well-being of Florida households and families; *and*

**WHEREAS**, poverty, unemployment and the slow economic recovery remain persistent national problems for many, and household expenses remain a burden on low-income households; *and*

**WHEREAS**, low-income families in Florida disproportionately spend about three times more of their income on basic energy services than the typical middle-income American family; *and*

**WHEREAS**, homes in low-income and minority communities severely lack energy efficiency features that enable lower energy bills; *and*

**WHEREAS**, LIHEAP provides vital heating and cooling assistance to low-income families, including working-poor households, senior citizens, persons with disabilities and veterans; *and*

**WHEREAS**, the severe constraints on state budgets and the increased strain on the nation's support system provided by nonprofit, faith-based and other community organizations have reduced other resources available for energy assistance; *and*

**WHEREAS**, the primary Federal program providing assistance to low-income households to pay high heating bills is the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP); *and*

**WHEREAS**, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has been an effective and successful program in meeting the energy needs of low-income elderly, disabled, veterans and poor working households, and those making the difficult transition from welfare to work, throughout the United States, including Florida; *and*

**WHEREAS**, LIHEAP is not an entitlement, but rather a targeted block grant program which provides flexible Federal-State partnerships and is the foundation for many programs authorized by state public utility commissions to assist low-income customers to meet their bill payment obligations through direct assistance; to prevent service terminations during cold and hot weather emergencies; to make the transition from public assistance to economic self-reliance; to help low-income households remain economically self-sufficient; *and*

**WHEREAS**, federal LIHEAP funding has declined from \$5.1 billion in 2010 to \$3.4 billion in 2015; *and*

**WHEREAS**, less than 135,000 Florida households received LIHEAP assistance in 2014, or less than ten (10%) of all eligible; *and*

**WHEREAS**, according to the National Energy Assistance Directors Association, many low-income families "will have few choices but to cut back on essential necessities, such as medicine, food, and clothing"; *and*



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**WHEREAS**, The National Energy and Utility Affordability Coalition (NEUAC) and other consumer advocate groups support increased LIHEAP funding and have asked that LIHEAP funding be increased to \$4.7 billion for FY 2016, which is the fully authorized funding level approved in the Energy Policy Act of 2005; *and*

**WHEREAS**, another impactful solution to increase Florida's share of funding, without increasing the overall federal LIHEAP budget, is for Congressional budget appropriators to simply "follow enabling law" – the allocation formula actually prescribed by Congress. Florida and other states (especially warm weather states) in great need would see a significant increase in their LIHEAP share, as the enabling law recognizes the dangers of extreme heat as well as extreme cold. It also factors in energy costs and the most recent demographics of population and poverty. In fact, the Congressional Research Service's latest (June 25, 2015) estimate confirmed that Florida would conservatively gain an additional \$38.5 million in LIHEAP funding - or 55% - if appropriations adhered to LIHEAP's enabling law. This is with no increase in the current federal funding total of \$3.39 billion;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the **Florida Council on Aging** urges the Appropriations Committee of the United States House of Representatives and Congress to appropriate LIHEAP funding of at least \$3.39 billion in the FY 2016 budget; and that Congress follow the enabling law when determining appropriations by state.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a copy of this resolution be sent to all members of Congress, seeking their support continued funding for this program.

**Adopted October 23, 2015 by the Florida Council on Aging**

*Signed:*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Margaret Lynn Duggar". The signature is written in a cursive style.

**Margaret Lynn Duggar**  
**Executive Director**