



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.

PRESS RELEASE

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SANDERS BLASTS GOP ELIMINATION OF LIHEAP  
AND CUTS IN OTHER SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Congressman Bernie Sanders took to the Floor of the House immediately this morning to call attention to a late-night action to eliminate funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Sanders opened the business day by leading the House in the Pledge of Allegiance, and later blasted the hypocrisy of a Congress extolling "family values" and cutting programs such as LIHEAP.

"What kind of family values are contained in the Republican "Contract with America" that wants to provide billions in tax cuts to wealthy Americans, billions in increased defense spending, and at the same time cuts back on programs for the weakest and most vulnerable people in our society" Sanders said.

Late last night, a House Appropriations subcommittee passed out a rescission package that would slash \$4.28 billion from health, labor and education programs between now and the end of fiscal year 1997. Including in that package of cuts was the absolute elimination of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

LIHEAP provides approximately 24,000 Vermonters with subsidies to heat their homes. Fuel assistance recipients have an annual income of less than 150 percent of poverty, and more than 70 percent of these households had incomes of less than \$8,000.

"Many Americans, including the disabled and senior citizens are in desperate need of LIHEAP funding and without it these vulnerable Americans will be forced to chose between heating their homes and feeding their families" Sanders said.

The \$4.28 billion in cuts are part of a larger rescission bill that will cut a total of \$10 billion to \$15 billion for a "slush fund" to pay for capital gains and other proposed Republican tax cuts as well as an emergency supplemental bill requested by the President.

Of the programs slated for cuts, LIHEAP took by far the greatest hit with a \$1.3 billion cut in advance fiscal year 1996 appropriations. Beyond the cuts in LIHEAP, the package cut Head Start by \$105 million, Corporation for Public Broadcasting by \$141 million (or 30 percent of program funding by FY96), job training by \$550 million, state school reform by \$142 million,

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eliminate the drug free schools program, which receives \$482 million, WIC child nutrition program by \$25 million and cut \$26.3 million from rural health outreach programs.

Contact: Tina Wisell 802-862-0697  
Jane Sanders 202-225-4115.S