

By: Staples

S.R. No. 159

SENATE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, More than four million Texans are at or below 125 percent of federal poverty guidelines, but only 220,000, or 5.5 percent, are served by the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, according to the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, which administers the program in our state; and

WHEREAS, Income guidelines for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which provides funding for the Weatherization Assistance Program and the Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program at the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, allow households to have income levels of up to 125 percent of current poverty guidelines; however, based upon 2000 census data, Texas has more than three million persons who are at or below 100 percent of the poverty guidelines; and

WHEREAS, Home energy assistance is particularly important in Texas due to the intense heat, which is a critical health threat to the elderly, persons with disabilities, and very young children; in fact, the Texas Department of Health reports that in our state more individuals die due to heat-related stress than exposure to excessive cold; and

WHEREAS, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program funds are distributed based on an outdated formula that disproportionately favors heating degree days in northern states over cooling degree days in southern states and does not utilize the most current state-specific population, income, and energy price data; and

WHEREAS, Current appropriations for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program do not include advance funds, which are vital to ensuring the timely and orderly delivery of services during the period after funding for the program is authorized by the United States Congress and before Texas is notified of its final appropriation level for the program year; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 78th Legislature, 4th Called Session, hereby respectfully urge the Congress of the United States to increase appropriations to the full-funding level of the \$3.4 billion authorized and include advance funds for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program and to pursue a more equitable funding allocation formula for the program; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this Resolution to the president of the United States, to the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the senate of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to the congress with the request that this Resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on May 17, 2004.

Secretary of the Senate