

By: Chisum

H.C.R. No. 166

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1           WHEREAS, More than four million Texans are at or below 125  
2 percent of federal poverty guidelines, but only 173,323, or 4.3  
3 percent, are served by the federal Low Income Home Energy  
4 Assistance Program (LIHEAP), according to the Texas Department of  
5 Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA), which administers the  
6 program in our state; and

7           WHEREAS, Income guidelines for LIHEAP, which provides  
8 funding for the Weatherization Assistance Program and the  
9 Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program at TDHCA, allow households  
10 to have income levels of up to 125 percent of current poverty  
11 guidelines; however, based upon 2000 census data, Texas has more  
12 than three million persons who are at or below 100 percent of the  
13 poverty guidelines; and

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

20           WHEREAS, LIHEAP funds are distributed based on an outdated  
21 formula that disproportionately favors heating degree days in  
22 northern states over cooling degree days in southern states and  
23 does not utilize the most current state-specific population,  
24 income, and energy price data; and

1           WHEREAS, While funding was close to level from federal fiscal  
2 year 2003 to 2005, the recent increase in energy costs has further  
3 reduced the already limited number of eligible Texans who can be  
4 served by LIHEAP; and

5           WHEREAS, Current appropriations for LIHEAP do not include  
6 advance funds, which are vital to ensuring the timely and orderly  
7 delivery of services during the period after funding for the  
8 program is authorized by Congress and before Texas is notified of  
9 its final appropriation level for the program year; now, therefore,  
10 be it

11           RESOLVED, That the 79th Legislature of the State of Texas  
12 hereby respectfully urge the Congress of the United States to  
13 increase funding to the fully authorized level and include advance  
14 funds for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program and to  
15 pursue a more equitable funding allocation formula for the program;  
16 and, be it further

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