

degree heat rolls around this year, the situation is going to become very critical very quickly. Air conditioners run on electricity, and a lot of electricity comes from natural gas. Natural gas prices have more than tripled in the last 3 years, from \$3 to \$4 per thousand cubic feet to \$10 to \$15.

These costs are really hitting home as State public utility commissions, PUCs, are increasing fuel charges on electric bills. The need for relief is going to be intense this summer, but the Federal Government's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, also called LIHEAP, is going to do next to nothing to help. For example, over 60,000 Houston area families got their power cut off in the summer of 2001 and only 14,443 people received 2001 cooling assistance statewide in Texas.

□ 2000

How can that be? The problem is that the LIHEAP formula is completely biased toward heating costs and ignores cooling costs. Many people believe that LIHEAP is a cold weather State program only. In the Northeast, the Midwest coalition lobbies for it and my Northeast and Midwest colleagues talk most about the program.

The media tends to cover LIHEAP funding issues only during the winter months. The shocking facts are that 3 percent of LIHEAP funding goes toward cooling homes in the summer, and 74 percent goes toward heating homes in the winter. Incredibly, LIHEAP spends three times more on administrative costs than it spends saving lives from heatstroke.

States like Texas, Florida and California that have large low-income populations vulnerable to hot weather get almost no funding. Low-income people in New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania receive eight or nine times as much LIHEAP per low-income resident.

In Texas, we have 3.7 million people who are eligible for LIHEAP due to income, but only 4.5 percent receive any assistance. The State of Texas canceled its Low Income Energy Assistance Program as electric bills were on their way up, and our constituents have nowhere to turn.

The cold weather bias is unacceptable, because hot weather kills just as many or more people than cold. According to the National Weather Service, which uses media reports and local government information, from 1985 to 2000 there were 2,596 fatalities caused by heat, an average of 235 per year, and 462 fatalities caused by cold, an average of only 24 a year.

It is scandalous that LIHEAP provides 3 percent of the funding for cooling, and hot weather kills 19 times more people than cold weather. However, a peer-reviewed study at the University of Delaware shows that over 1,000 people die from heat in the 15 biggest cities alone in the average summer, well over either government estimate. So neither National Weather Service nor the CDC data tells the full picture.

Reported causes of death are unreliable. The American Meteorological Society found several peer-reviewed academic studies showing that heart attack and stroke rates increased during hot weather. These heat-related deaths are often attributed to those other causes like heart disease and stroke and are not recorded as heat-related deaths.

The society's study found cold snaps do not cause death rates to go up versus average winter death rates, but extreme heat causes death rates to go up dramatically in the summer. As a result, the LIHEAP program is clearly completely divorced from reality. Heat kills more, but LIHEAP ignores cooling assistance.

The LIHEAP program is so biased because the funding formula is outdated. LIHEAP is based on an obsolete formula that is only still around because of the political support. The tragedy is that this political calculation is contributing to hundreds of preventable deaths annually.

Here are a few of the factors that go into the current LIHEAP formula: A ratio of State and national low income households in 1979; residential energy expenditures in 1979; a State's annual average number of heating days between 1931 and 1980; the number of a State's households at or below 125 percent of Federal poverty in 1980; a State's increase in home heating expenditures in 1980; the increase in total home residential heating expenditures between 1977 and 1980; and also 75 percent of each State's 1981 crude oil windfall profits tax formula.

This is a formula that is just ridiculous, and we need to update it. As we can see, this information is over 25 years old and completely irrelevant to modern reality. The fact that the primary LIHEAP formula still uses data from the date of the disco is unbelievable. There is absolutely no excuse for the program to allocate life-saving money based on such a formula.

While supporters of the current formula defend it by pointing to the \$2 billion trigger, it is a red herring. Our Northeast and Midwest friends and colleagues insist the rising tide lifts all boats. Once the funding gets above \$2 billion a year, a new formula directs it, but Congress has seldom voted over \$2 billion.

It is true that there is a trigger and this obsolete formula goes away for appropriations over \$2 billion. However, Congress rarely goes over that \$2 billion dollar trigger, and when they do, they use accounting tricks to avoid the modern, fair formula.

For example, members in the other body are trying to move \$1 billion in LIHEAP funding from the reconciliation bill from fiscal year 2007 to 2006. That would mean a total appropriation of \$3 billion, including what Congress has already done, which should help for cooling.

However, the reconciliation bill put \$750 million of that extra \$1 billion into a "contingency" account that uses no formula and the White House can do whatever it wants with it. His-

tory tells us that Southern states and cooling needs will see very little, if any, of that money.

Unsurprisingly Southern members have placed a hold on the bill.

The only solution is changing the LIHEAP formula.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee nearly accomplished a fairer formula during the energy bill debate, where my amendment would have lowered the "trigger" to \$1 billion to make a difference.

Northeastern and Midwestern members protested and offered a compromise to increase the authorization to \$5 billion, which many of accepted at the time as a good faith offer.

However, the budget reconciliation bill revealed the true motive to deny funding for cooling assistance and to deny much needed LIHEAP funding for Southern, mid-American, and Western states.

Along with my colleagues CHIP PICKERING, MIKE ROSS, CHARLIE GONZALEZ, MICHAEL BURGESS, and many others, we will continue to push for justice in the LIHEAP formula.

We can no longer allow Congress to use a 25 year old formula to ignore hundreds of preventable deaths every year—it is unconscionable and outrageous.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

AMERICA IS NOT WINNING ON THE TRADE FRONT

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, America is not winning on the global trade front. Last Friday, the U.S. Department of Commerce announced the United States has the largest trade deficit in our history. So many more imports are coming in here than exports, and every American can affirm that every time they go to shop.

At \$725 billion in the red in 2005, that is three-quarters of a trillion dollars, our trade deficit is growing at a rate of more than \$1,500,000 every minute. This total is more than 18 percent higher than one year ago.

Sectors such as agriculture, as well as manufacturing, which once sustained a thriving economy here, are now withering. For every billion dollars in deficit, we are shedding a minimum of over 10,000 jobs. Workers' wages are not rising, their pensions are being cut, health care costs are going