

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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****SUMMARY INCLUDED BELOW**

KENNEDY ON PASSAGE OF NIH AND LIHEAP FUNDING AMENDMENT

WASHINGTON, DC— Today, Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, released the following statement in response to the passage of budget amendment #4023, which will provide an additional \$2.1 billion in funding to NIH and \$1 billion for LIHEAP.

“This vote is a victory in two key areas. It’s a victory for public health, and it’s also a victory for protecting our most vulnerable citizens from the high cost of energy.

It provides an additional \$2.1 billion to NIH for increased research and discovery in the life sciences. It’s a much needed support at a critical time for an indispensable research agency whose budget has failed even to keep up with the rate of inflation in this all-important sector. Our goal is nothing less than to keep the nation on the leading edge of research in all of the life sciences. It makes no sense for Congress to shortchange NIH when its potential for new discovery has never been greater.

The amendment also includes an additional \$1 billion in urgently needed fuel assistance for our low-income families. Millions of families around the country are struggling to keep up with the soaring cost of energy. These funds will provide relief to those faced with the impossible choices such as between heating their homes next winter or paying for food or essential health care. They deserve this help, and it’s essential for Congress to provide it.”

Summary of Amendment #4203

Amendment to provide an additional \$2.1 billion for NIH and \$1 billion for LIHEAP, for a total of \$32.1 billion for the NIH and \$3.5 billion for LIHEAP.

Offered by Harkin-Specter (Senator Kennedy is a cosponsor)

This amendment would increase NIH funding by an additional \$2.1 billion over the current budget request, bringing the total NIH budget to \$32.1 billion. This is an 8.4% increase over FY08, which is well above the biomedical inflation rate (BRDPI) of 3.5%.

The amendment would also add \$1 billion to LIHEAP, above the \$2.5 billion provided in the budget resolution---bringing the total to \$3.5 billion. The Administration requested only \$2 billion for LIHEAP in FY09, which would be a 22% cut from the FY08 enacted level of \$2.57 billion. LIHEAP serves about 16% of eligible households: 5 million households of about 35 million which are eligible. Adding \$1 billion to LIHEAP would be enough to provide the average benefit---about \$360---to about 2.7 million households.

These proposed amendments are offset by Function 920.

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