

*Washington, DC* - With the home heating season underway, Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) announced that \$538,243,391 in federal funds were released today to help low-income New Yorkers pay for home heating costs in the months ahead. The funds come from a bill that included \$5.1 billion for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which the congressman helped pass last month. New York received the most funds out of any state. Hinchey and his Democratic colleagues in Congress had to fight with the Bush administration to raise the total funding available for LIHEAP from \$2.5 billion to \$5.1 billion.

"The release of these new federal home heating funds come just in time for many New York families who have been unsure as to how they were going to afford to heat their homes during the upcoming fall and winter months," Hinchey said. "I was very pleased to successfully work in Congress to double the amount of federal home heating assistance available to those most in need. Not a single person should ever be forced to shiver through the night because they can't afford to heat their home. The release of these federal funds helps fulfill a moral obligation all Americans have to one another and will now make it easier for so many low-income families across our state to keep up with paying for all of life's most basic necessities such as mortgage and rent payments, food, and health care."

Last year, Hinchey and his colleagues in the House pressed for higher levels of LIHEAP funding, but the White House and its allies in Congress blocked increased aid and instead forced the allocation of LIHEAP funds to be left at a little more than \$2.5 billion, including \$586 million in contingency funds to be released at the president's discretion. Recognizing that low-income people in New York and across the country are going to need greater assistance to pay for home heating and cooling, Hinchey and his colleagues pressed the House leadership over the summer to pass a funding measure that would allocate an additional \$2.5 billion for LIHEAP -- which would result in LIHEAP being funded at \$5.1 billion this year. Hinchey and his colleagues succeeded in their work when the House passed the increased funding in September.

Beginning November 3, low-income New Yorkers may apply for 2008-2009 LIHEAP benefits by mail, in person at their local social services office, over the phone, or online. For further information, members of the public may go to [www.otda.state.ny.us/main/heap](http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/heap) or call the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance toll-free hotline at

1-800-342-3009 .

## **Hinchey Announces Release of More Than \$538 Million in**

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The bill that included \$5.1 billion for LIHEAP also allocated \$477.2 million for the Energy Weatherization Assistance Program, which pays for a variety of energy efficient upgrades and appliances for low-income households in order to help lower their monthly energy bills. New York is slated to receive an estimated \$45.2 million from the program, but those funds have yet to be released. The new funds will help weatherize more than 190,000 homes across the country, including approximately 18,000 homes in New York, saving each household about \$400 in energy costs.