



February 20, 2026

To: Chairperson Hardin, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee  
From: Anahí Salazar, Voices for Children in Nebraska

**RE: Support for LB 1033, Require the Department of Health and Human Services to make crisis assistance payments under the low-income home energy assistance program**

Every household should have access to safe indoor temperatures, and this shouldn't be hindered by an inability to pay for utilities. Voices for Children in Nebraska supports LB 1033 because it provides households with funds in order to respond to emergency situations regarding heating, cooling and weatherization under the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

LIHEAP responds to emergencies by providing crisis grants when a household faces utility shutoff or experiences a weather-related e-related energy emergency. Recipients are among the most vulnerable individuals. More than 70% of LIHEAP recipients include at least one person with a disability, a child under six years old or a senior citizen.<sup>1</sup> LIHEAP protects the health and safety of children and families, it ensures families can keep their homes warm in winter and cool in summer, helping prevent heat-related illness, hypothermia, and other health risks.<sup>2</sup>

The program reduces financial hardship for low-income-income families. Energy bills take a much larger share of income for limited income-income households. As a result, 27% of Americans have recently skipped essentials like food or medicine to pay energy bills.<sup>3</sup> LIHEAP reduces this burden by providing direct financial assistance. -or-eat" trade-offsElectricity prices have recently outpaced inflation, and 1 in 6 U.S. households are already behind on their energy bills.<sup>4</sup> The program helps families avoid impossible "heat-or-eat" tradeoffs.

LIHEAP can be a lifeline during a period of high energy insecurity. It is essential because it keeps vulnerable families safe, prevents power loss, reduces poverty, and stabilizes household finances—all during a time when energy costs and extreme weather are increasing. We want to thank Senator Spivey for this important legislation and the Committee for your consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> Edison Electric Institute, [LIHEAP](#), 2026.

<sup>2</sup> National Energy & Utility Affordability Coalition, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Protects access to utilities and fuel, <https://neuac.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/LIHEAP-Talking-Points-2025.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Survey: Millions of Americans Struggling to Keep Up With Rising Energy Costs, <https://www.helpadvisor.com/housing/americans-struggling-to-pay-energy-bills-study>.

<sup>4</sup> National Council on Aging, <https://www.ncoa.org/article/what-is-the-low-income-home-energy-assistance-program-liheap/>, 2025.