

days ago in not having unacceptable cuts in Medicare and Medicaid as a condition of talking is wrong, is wrong, and we should not do that. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:39 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program *December 15, 1995*

Dear Mr. Leader:

I am increasingly concerned that, under the current continuing resolution, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance program (LIHEAP) is not meeting the needs of families requiring heating assistance.

With the onset of winter, low-income families need more help to keep their homes warm. Each year, LIHEAP assistance goes to about six million needy households, many of which have an elderly or disabled member or young children.

Normally, by this time of year, States' energy assistance programs would be adequately funded to help households tackle high energy bills and insulate drafty homes. This year, however, Congress still has not passed a full-year appropriations bill for Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies—the bill which funds LIHEAP. The House voted to end LIHEAP altogether.

Under the two continuing resolutions that have been enacted this fall, LIHEAP has been

funded at only \$232 million. Last year, over three times that amount was available to States between September and the end of December.

I strongly urge Congress to pass a full-year appropriation as soon as possible that includes funding for LIHEAP. At a minimum, Congress must enable the Administration to make available a seasonally appropriate share of the previously appropriated funds for LIHEAP.

Congress should act quickly. Since winter is almost upon us, a rising number of low-income Americans, particularly those living in colder regions, will continue to need more help to keep warm at home.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Robert Dole, Senate majority leader; Richard Gephardt, House Democratic leader; and Thomas Daschle, Senate Democratic leader.

Message on the Observance of Hanukkah *December 15, 1995*

Warm greetings to all who are celebrating Hanukkah.

Each year, as the days grow shorter and the nights colder, we welcome the return of this Festival of Lights, and each year we find fresh meaning in its ageless story of the triumph of the Maccabees. We are reminded of God's powerful presence in our lives, strengthening and sustaining us in times of struggle. We are inspired to reflect upon the meaning of courage, commitment, and faith. We are encouraged to

acknowledge our blessings—the love of family, the strength of community, the hope of peace. We rediscover the wisdom of pausing, in the rush and hurry of everyday life, to give joyful thanks for these blessings.

This year, especially, we need such reminders, for with the death of Yitzhak Rabin, a great man, a true friend, and a peacemaker was taken from our midst. But as families throughout our nation and around the world gather to rekindle the flames of the menorah, let us renew our