



Michigan League FOR Human Services

**Testimony on House Bill 5190
House Energy and Technology Committee
Gilda Z. Jacobs, President & CEO
December 6, 2011**

Good morning, Chairman Horn and members of the committee. I am Gilda Jacobs, President & CEO of the Michigan League for Human Services. The League is a nonprofit, nonpartisan statewide policy and advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that Michigan's struggling residents achieve economic security. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

For years, LIEEF has been an effective program that has helped to protect Michigan families by providing heating assistance and preventing emergency shutoffs during the cold winter months. It has also funded energy efficiency projects that reduce heating costs. Last year, LIEEF money combined with federal dollars helped over 600,000 households in Michigan. However, a court decision last summer struck down the financing mechanism for LIEEF. The court's decision had nothing to do with the effectiveness of the program, but rather a legislative drafting error.

The League believes the Legislature must act quickly to ensure that children, the elderly and vulnerable families across the state are not left in the cold this winter. House Bill 5190 would eliminate LIEEF unnecessarily. It would refund the \$40 million currently held in escrow for the purpose of funding LIEEF and would provide only a short-term solution using TANF dollars that could be used in other ways if the money in escrow was used as intended.

There is a better solution—House Bill 5008. This bill is currently before this committee. House Bill 5008 would restore the Michigan Public Service Commission's oversight of LIEEF and would ensure that this effective program can continue short term and long term. It is a simple fix. We urge you to take up House Bill 5008 to help protect those in need before the next snow fall.

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