

# Weatherization Enhancement and Local Energy Efficiency Investment and Accountability Act

The Weatherization Enhancement and Local Energy Efficiency Investment and Accountability Act was reintroduced in March 2015 by Alliance Honorary Chair Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.), Vice-Chair Senator Chris Coons (D-De.), Board Member Senator Susan Collins (R-Me.), along with Senator Jack Reed (D-R.I.). This legislation would reauthorize and improve two important energy efficiency programs: the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) and the State Energy Program (SEP).

## Summary

This bill, which is nearly identical to S. 2052 from last year, maintains appropriate resources for both WAP and SEP, two programs that had been consistently and regularly reauthorized on a bipartisan basis until the authorization for both programs was allowed to expire in 2012. WAP has weatherized more than seven million homes for low-income families, seniors, and individuals with disabilities since April of 2009, and reauthorizing the program for the next five years will ensure that more Americans are able to reduce their energy consumption and save money.

This legislation also includes a complementary innovation initiative to leverage private funding for weatherization projects. Non-profit organizations with a track record of success will be eligible for DOE grants to supplement their existing private sector or volunteer resources. This initiative would increase the reach of limited federal funds to help even more families save energy in their homes.

Additionally, the measure would create minimum professional standards for WAP contractors and workers, and instruct grant recipients to provide certification and training opportunities for their employees. The bill would also establish an independent quality assurance program for houses weatherized under WAP.

## Impact

The Weatherization Enhancement and Local Energy Efficiency Investment and Accountability Act would build upon the past successes of WAP and SEP while also modernizing the programs to adapt to the current challenges. For the last 36 years, the Weatherization Assistance Program has helped low-income Americans reduce their energy costs by investing in energy efficiency. The updates to the program contained in this bill would continue this important weatherization work and increase the reach of federal funds, helping even more Americans invest in energy efficiency to save money on their utility bills.

Similarly, for close to 40 years SEP has been able to encourage strategic and programmatic energy-related activities to increase energy efficiency, develop alternative energy, promote energy development and reduce energy dependency. SEP has also been highly productive with its funding in the past, generating more than \$7 in savings on energy costs for every \$1 of funding.