



Office of
Jason Crowell State
Senator

The Crowell Connection



Senator Jason Crowell – Serving Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Madison, Mississippi, Perry, and Scott Counties.

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Affording the High Cost of Heating

The cold weather outside is uncomfortable, but it is also downright dangerous—especially for the very young and senior citizens. Cooling and heating bills make up an average of about 45 percent of a household’s utility costs. For many, these costs can be concerning, but for Missourians living on low incomes who cannot afford the high cost of winter heating, there is a state program to make sure that no one is left out in the cold. This program could receive a boost from a state budget proposal to provide an additional \$6.4 million in financial assistance. This week, House Bill 2015 was approved by the full Senate, and it will now move on to the governor’s desk for his approval.



Being able to heat your home is not a luxury but a necessity here in Southeast Missouri. With heating costs rising, more Missouri families are struggling to heat their homes. In 1979, our state established the Utilicare program to help low-income Missourians with their utility costs. The program recognizes that no Missourian

should have to choose between heating their home and other necessities, such as food and prescription medicine. The assistance is distributed to agencies through local Community Action Agencies. Assistance is based upon household size, income and type of fuel used for home heating.

Utilicare is supported by federal funding, and in 2006, the state began to once again supplement the program with state dollars so that more Missourians who need the program could utilize it. Every year since, the amount the state puts towards the program has increased with the cost of inflation. This money fully funds this energy assistance program for those who need it the most. House Bill 2015 will provide \$6.4 million in additional state funding to go towards the Utilicare Stabilization Fund for the purpose of funding the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The LIHEAP program ensures approximately 22,000 Missouri families who might otherwise have their service shut-off due to nonpayment will have heat through the winter.



If you think you might be eligible for the Utilicare program, contact your local community action agency online at <http://www.eastmoaa.org/> or by phone at 1-800- 392-8663 (for Cape Girardeau, Madison, Perry, and Bollinger counties) or online at <http://www.daeoc.org/> or by phone at 1-800-748-8320 (for Mississippi and Scott counties).

Contact Me

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions and concerns. Please feel free to contact me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2459. You may write to me at Jason Crowell; Missouri Senate; State Capitol; Jefferson City, MO 65101, or email me at: jcrowell@senate.mo.gov or visit me on the web at <http://www.jasoncrowell.com>.

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