



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John W. Mannion

## Senator John W. Mannion introduces legislation for automatic re-enrollment in the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) and eliminate the burden of having to reapply every year

JOHN W. MANNION | October 13, 2022

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ALBANY, NY – Senator John W. Mannion (SD-50) today announced legislation to remove enrollment barriers for New Yorkers eligible for the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP).

S9578, introduced by Senator Mannion removes the arduous bureaucratic burden of reapplying for home heating benefits every year by automatically re-enrolling eligible New Yorkers. [S9574](#), previously introduced in the Assembly by Assemblymember Billy Jones and newly sponsored by Senator Mannion in the Senate, creates a new middle-income HEAP tier to help additional New Yorkers struggling with home heating costs.

Senator John W. Mannion said, “With utility companies warning that home heating bills could rise seventeen to forty percent this winter, it is a matter of public health, safety, and a moral obligation to ensure eligible New Yorkers continue to receive HEAP benefits without interruption. Legislation requiring a uniform, automatic, re-enrollment standard for eligible individuals will ensure no household falls through the cracks. Together, with legislation I’m sponsoring to create a new middle-income HEAP tier – I am advancing a legislative home heating assistance package that will bring relief and stability to the families that need it the

most.”

Laurie Wheelock, Executive Director and Counsel of the Public Utility Law Project of New York said, "PULP thanks Senator Mannion and Assemblymember Rosenthal for introducing legislation that will streamline the re-enrollment of eligible households in HEAP. Every year, more than a million New Yorkers receive HEAP benefits to help pay their heating bill. It's an essential program, but slow application processing can cause unnecessary and stressful delays before these necessary funds are applied to the heating account. In many cases, the Department of Social Services already knows who qualifies for the program. The automatic re-enrollment of those households, without the need for completing the same application annually and going through another interview process, would put much needed financial relief in people's pockets quicker and without interruption.”

In some parts of the state, individuals and families who receive HEAP benefits are already re-enrolled automatically if they qualify based on their enrollment in other social service programs such as Public Assistance, Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). For example, New York City's Human Resources Administration (HRA) has re-enrolled many HEAP recipients but in many other parts of the state, New Yorkers need to reapply, and many people don't even know whether they will be automatically re-enrolled or not. This legislation would require automatic re-enrollment, ensuring all low-income New Yorkers continue to receive this critical assistance in paying their rising heating bills this winter.

More than one million New Yorkers receive regular HEAP benefits. The federal government determines the program's parameters, which restricts eligibility to people living at or below the poverty line. The Middle-Income Home Energy Assistance Program will also help Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) families get the help they need to heat their homes this winter. Thirty-one percent of households in New York State are ALICE

households, which is twice as many households that live below the federal poverty line.

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