

JUNE 20, 2001

**CONGRESS FAILS TO INCREASE FUNDING TO ASSIST PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITIES WITH HIGH ENERGY COSTS**

**SCHAKOWSKY SAYS CHICAGO NEEDS ADDITIONAL \$10 MILLION TO PAY HIGHER ENERGY COST IN PUBLIC HOUSING**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today expressed disappointment after Republicans in Congress refused to give public housing authorities additional funds to help pay high energy bills. Republicans refused to allow a vote on an amendment by Schakowsky and Representative Elliot Engel (D-NY) to an emergency appropriations bill that would have provided \$300 million in emergency funds to help the Department of Housing and Urban Development meet increased energy demands.

Below is Schakowsky's Congressional Record statement:

*"The needs of hundreds of thousands of families and persons with disabilities are ignored because there is no funding in this emergency appropriations bill to ensure their well-being during the hot summer months and the bitter winter, ahead.*

*"Public housing authorities across the country are paying higher energy cost to keep public housing families warm in the winter and seniors cool in the summer. Chicago will need an additional \$10 million to pay higher cost in public housing and to provide assistance to families in private housing*

*"Public housing is still catching up with the shortfalls found in the FY1999, FY2000, and FY2001 appropriation bills. According to the Energy Information Administration, home heating oil prices increased nationally from 88 cents to \$1.35, a 53% increase, from FY1999 to FY2000. Natural Gas jumped 51% - from \$6.69 per thousand cubic feet to \$10.07.*

*"There is no doubt that this is an emergency. We are in the middle of the summer. In 1995, 700 people died in the Chicago area because of a heat wave. There were more deaths all across the country. We can't allow another tragedy like that to happen simply because Congress refused to give HUD enough money to give air conditioning to seniors in public housing.*

*"If Congress doesn't act, what is more likely to happen is that the public housing authorities will divert funds from capital repairs and improvements to pay utility bills. In Chicago, we have a \$1.5 billion plan to rebuild public housing, including money to make units more energy efficient. My fear is that such plans in Chicago and across the country will be slowed unless we help address higher energy cost unless we provide emergency energy assistance to public housing authorities nationwide."*