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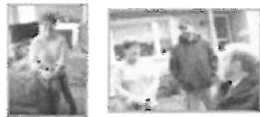
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# Homeowner helps Langevin underscore weatherization program

By John Howell



ANNA GOLDERESE



It was toasty in the home of Anna Golderese. So warm that glasses and camera lenses fogged and people took off their coats.

Yet, Golderese hasn't turned on the heat this season, not since her 1,100 square-foot home in West Warwick was insulated under the Westbay Community Action Weatherization Program earlier this fall.

Now Golderese, who has been out of work since an automobile accident two years ago, hopes to dramatically reduce last winter's \$3,000 heating bill.

Golderese was so happy about what's happened – all at no cost to her – that she wrote Congressman James Langevin last month.

And Tuesday morning, Langevin visited Golderese to share her story and to use the venue as the stage to restore cuts to the heating assistance program that funds the purchase of home heating oil and weatherization improvements for those who can least afford it.

“While we're fighting in Washington to get our fiscal house in order, I'm afraid many of my colleagues are making decisions that are penny wise and pound foolish by looking for reductions anywhere they can find them in order to send out a press release with the word 'cut' in it, regardless of how the elimination of a program will reverberate through the economy,” Langevin said.

He said House Republicans requested \$33 million for weatherization assistance, which is \$141 million below last year's level, and \$287 million below President Obama's budget request.

Langevin called the action “unacceptable” and said he is writing members of Congress to restore the funding.

“I understand that we must find efficiencies in our budget to begin to reduce our debt – in fact, I signed a letter to the so-called Supercommittee asking them to start with the elimination of

subsidies we're providing to profitable oil companies, which could save over \$122 billion in the next 10 years," he said.

Golderese said the program didn't only address home insulation, of which there was virtually none before, but a temperamental boiler that belched smoke when Westbay weatherization auditor Derek DeCosta checked it. Also, they went through the house installing efficient light bulbs. A competent and polite crew from Greenwich Insulation and CD Heating accomplished all of this quickly.

"They were a joy to have around my house, no mess, no issues and when they left I was dumbfounded to believe I did not pay a dime for this," she wrote Langevin.

Yet, as DeCosta said, even though people who receive heating oil assistance are made aware of free weatherization, only a handful sign up for an energy audit to start the process. Renters are also eligible for the weatherization program.

"I can't understand anyone saying 'No' to this," Golderese said.

According to Julie Capobianco, chief of the program, about 100 to 125 homes are weatherized every month. The program is funded through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program and has been operating since 1977.

Golderese, who received \$400 in LIHEAP funds for home heating oil purchases last year, is still eligible for the heating assistance. LIHEAP assistance is available from Nov. 1 to March 31 to residents at or below 60 percent of the Rhode Island median income.

Given her experience, which she called an example of "good government," Golderese urged people never to be too proud to ask for help.

"You never know when a rainy day hits," she said, "and it's been pouring."