

HOUSE No. 3666

By Mr. Pina of New Bedford, petition of Ronald A. Pina and another for legislation to require a reduced rate of at least fifty percent by gas, electric and telephone companies for service to the elderly. Government Regulations.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy-Three.

AN ACT REQUIRING A REDUCED RATE OF AT LEAST FIFTY PERCENT BY GAS, ELECTRIC AND TELEPHONE COMPANIES FOR SERVICE TO THE ELDERLY.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. It is hereby declared that many elderly persons
2 reside in the commonwealth whose annual net income from all
3 sources is less than the amount necessary to enable them to
4 maintain decent living conditions in the inflationary economy
5 presently existing and whose income is fixed in whole or in part
6 so as to be not adjusted to such an economy; that the provision
7 of the services of public utilities, including gas, electric and
8 telephone, at rates reduced from inflationary levels is a necessity
9 of life for such persons so that they may be able to protect
10 themselves from the adversities of old age by continuing to live
11 in private or family units; that the lack of such services at such
12 rates tends to cause an increase and spread of diseases, including
13 communicable and chronic diseases, by depriving such persons of
14 ample access to heating, cooking, and emergency medical
15 facilities; that such a condition aggravates those diseases and
16 illnesses peculiar to the elderly, thereby crowding the hospitals
17 and other institutions in the commonwealth with elderly persons
18 under conditions of idleness that inevitably invite senility; that
19 this situation constitutes a menace to the health, safety, welfare
20 and comfort of the inhabitants of the commonwealth; that a

21 public exigency exists which makes the provision of reduced rate
22 services to the elderly by public utilities a public necessity; that
23 the provision of such rates for the purpose of reducing the cost
24 to the commonwealth of their maintenance and care by
25 promoting their health and welfare, thereby prolonging their
26 productivity in the interest of the state and nation, constitutes
27 and hereby is declared to be a public purpose necessary for the
28 preservation of the public convenience.

1 SECTION 2. Chapter 25 of the General Laws is hereby
2 amended by inserting after section 9 a new section as follows: –

3 *Section 9A.* The department shall not approve rates or
4 schedules for gas, electric and telephone companies unless such
5 rates or schedules include provisions granting a reduced rate of at
6 least fifty percent to all elderly persons. As used herein the term
7 “elderly persons” shall mean persons sixty-five years of age or
8 older who are subscribers for gas, electric or telephone service
9 and who do not share such subscription with more than one
10 other person in the same dwelling unit who is less than sixty-five
11 years of age. The department shall adopt and, from time to time,
12 review and, if necessary, modify procedures for the prompt, fair
13 and efficient establishment and maintenance of such reduced
14 rates and schedules by all gas, electric and telephone companies.

1 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon its passage.