

By Mr. Royal L. Bolling, Jr., of Boston, petition of Royal L. Bolling, Jr., and other members of the General Court that gas, electric and telephone companies be required to reduce their rates by at least fifty percent for service to certain elderly persons. 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  
6 part so as to be not adjusted to such an economy; that the  
7 provision of the services of public utilities, including gas,  
8 electric and telephone, at rates reduced from inflationary levels  
9 is a necessity of life for such persons so that they may be able  
10 to protect themselves from the adversities of old age by  
11 continuing to live in private or family units; that the lack of  
12 such services at such rates tends to cause an increase and  
13 spread of diseases, including communicable and chronic  
14 diseases, by depriving such persons of ample access to heating,  
15 cooking, and emergency medical facilities; that such a condi-  
16 tion aggravates those diseases and illnesses peculiar to the  
17 elderly, thereby crowding the hospitals and other institutions in  
18 the commonwealth with elderly persons under conditions of  
19 idleness that inevitably invite senility; that this situation con-  
20 stitutes a menace to the health, safety, welfare and comfort of  
21 the inhabitants of the commonwealth; that a public exigency

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

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

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

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