

**SENATE . . . . . No. 630**

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By Mr. Tobin, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 630) of Arthur H. Tobin, Thomas F. Brownell, Elizabeth N. Metayer 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.

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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

AN ACT REQUIRING A REDUCED RATE OF AT LEAST FIFTY PERCENT BY GAS, ELECTRIC AND TELEVISION 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  
3 all 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 service of public utilities, including gas,  
8 electric and telephone, at rates reduced from inflationary  
9 levels is a necessity of life for such persons so that they may  
10 be able to protect themselves from the adversities of old age  
11 by continuing to live in private or family units; that the lack  
12 of 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 con-  
16 dition aggravates those diseases and illnesses peculiar to the  
17 elderly, thereby crowding the hospitals and other institutions  
18 in 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  
23 the elderly by public utilities a public necessity; that the pro-  
24 vision 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 state and nation, constitutes and hereby  
28 is declared to be a public purpose necessary for the preserva-  
29 tion 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 fol-  
3 lows: —

4 *Section 9A.* The department shall not approve rates or  
5 schedules for gas, electric, and telephone companies unless  
6 such rates of schedules include provisions granting a reduced  
7 rate of at least fifty percent to any person who is sixty-five  
8 years of age or older, and has resided within the common-  
9 wealth for more than five years, and is a subscriber for gas,  
10 electric or telephone service and is head of a household and  
11 does not share such subscription with more than one other  
12 person in the same dwelling unit who is less than sixty-five  
13 years of age. The department shall adopt and from time to  
14 time review and if necessary modify procedures for the  
15 prompt, fair and efficient establishment and maintenance of  
16 such reduced rates and schedules by all gas, electric and tele-  
17 phone companies. This section pertains strictly to household  
18 rates and schedules and shall not include any commercial use  
19 of any utility.

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