

HOUSE No. 941

By Mr. Piro of Somerville, petition of Vincent J. Piro that elderly persons be granted a reduced rate of at least fifty percent by gas, electric and telephone companies. Government Regulations.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

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, elec-
8 tric and telephone, at rates reduced from inflationary levels is a
9 necessity of life for such persons so that they may be able to
10 protect themselves from the adversities of old age by continu-
11 ing to live in private or family units; that the lack of such
12 services at such rates tends to cause an increase and spread of
13 diseases, including communicable and chronic diseases, by
14 depriving such persons of ample access to heating, cooking, and
15 emergency medical facilities; that such a condition aggravates
16 those diseases and illnesses peculiar to the elderly, thereby
17 crowding the hospitals and other institutions in the common-
18 wealth with elderly persons under conditions of idleness that
19 inevitably invite senility; that this situation constitutes a men-
20 ace to the health, safety, welfare and comfort of the inhabi-
21 tants of the commonwealth; that a public exigency exists
22 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 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 the following section: —
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-two 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-two 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.