

By Mr. Serra of Boston, petition of Emanuel G. Serra for legislation to extend protection against gas and electric service shutoff to certain vulnerable persons. Government Regulations.

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety-One.

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AN ACT EXTENDING PROTECTIONS AGAINST GAS AND ELECTRIC SERVICE SHUTOFF TO CERTAIN VULNERABLE PERSONS AND PROVIDING MORE EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT FOR THOSE PROTECTIONS.

*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. Section 124A of Chapter 164 of the General  
2 Laws is hereby amended by inserting, after the first sentence, the  
3 following two sentences: — Nor shall such company cut off  
4 service if such cut off is likely to lead to a serious illness, as so  
5 certified by a registered physician or local board of health shall  
6 be effective unless and until found invalid, after a hearing by the  
7 consumer division of the department.

1 SECTION 2. Chapter 164 of the General Laws is further  
2 amended by adding the following two sections after section  
3 124G: —

4 Section 124H. No gas or electric company shall shut off gas  
5 or electric service in any residence in which there resides a person  
6 under the age of eighteen months, a person over the age of sixty-  
7 five or a person who is handicapped, provided that the customer  
8 cannot afford to pay any overdue bill because of a financial  
9 hardship. The department may promulgate such rules and  
10 regulations consistent with this section as it deems reasonable and  
11 necessary to implement provisions of this section.

12 Section 124I. Any company found by the department to have  
13 wilfully violated sections 124, 124A, 124B, 124C, 124D, 124E,

14 124F, 124G, or 124H, or any provision of the department's  
15 regulations governing service practices toward residential  
16 customers, shall be assessed a penalty by the department, not to  
17 exceed one hundred dollars, payable to the person harmed by such  
18 violation.