

STATE OF NEW YORK

8492--A

Cal. No. 923

IN SENATE

March 7, 2022

Introduced by Sens. PARKER, CLEARE, GAUGHRAN -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Energy and Telecommunications -- reported favorably from said committee, ordered to first and second report, ordered to a third reading, amended and ordered reprinted, retaining its place in the order of third reading

AN ACT to amend the public service law, in relation to establishing discount programs for low-income senior citizens and individuals with a disability

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. The public service law is amended by adding a new section 66-t to read as follows:

§ 66-t. Utility discount program. 1. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the commission is authorized and directed to require a gas corporation, electric corporation or municipality to establish a discount program for low-income senior citizens and individuals with a disability no later than ninety days after the effective date of this section. Such program shall offer a yearly benefit to low-income senior citizens and individuals with a disability in the form of a ten percent discount on utility bills. The fiscal impact of such program shall not be borne by customers and shall not be added to bills rendered by a gas corporation, electric corporation or municipality to customers.

(b) A gas corporation, electric corporation or municipality which offers such discount program shall conspicuously advertise the availability and amount of such discount on the website of such gas corporation, electric corporation or municipality. The availability and amount of such discount shall also be conspicuously advertised on the accessibility page of the website of such gas corporation, electric corporation or municipality.

2. For the purposes of this section:

(a) "individuals with a disability" shall mean a primary named telephone service accountholder (i) with a disability, as defined in subdivision twenty-one of section two hundred ninety-two of the executive law; and (ii) who has had a total household income of less than fifty thousand dollars for the most recent two consecutive income tax years beginning in two thousand nineteen, as verified by the department of

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 taxation and finance; and (iii) who is currently receiving (A) social
2 security disability insurance (SSDI), (B) supplemental security income
3 (SSI) benefits under the federal social security act, (C) disability
4 pension or disability compensation benefits provided by the United
5 States department of veterans affairs, (D) disability pension or disa-
6 bility compensation benefits provided by the United States Postal
7 Service, or (E) those previously eligible by virtue of receiving disa-
8 bility benefits under the supplemental security income program or the
9 social security disability program and currently receiving medical
10 assistance benefits based on determination of disability as provided in
11 section three hundred sixty-six of the social services law; and

12 (b) "low-income senior citizen" shall mean a primary named telephone
13 service accountholder who (i) is at least sixty-five years of age; and
14 (ii) either (A) has had a total household income of less than fifty
15 thousand dollars for two consecutive income tax years beginning in two
16 thousand nineteen, as verified by the department of taxation and
17 finance; or (B) is annually eligible to receive assistance under the
18 emergency rental assistance program (ERAP) or the home energy assistance
19 program (HEAP).

20 § 2. The public service law is amended by adding a new section 89-q to
21 read as follows:

22 § 89-q. Water discount program. 1. (a) Notwithstanding any other
23 provision of law, the commission is authorized and directed to require
24 waterworks corporations and municipal water systems to establish a
25 discount program for low-income senior citizens and individuals with a
26 disability no later than ninety days after the effective date of this
27 section. Such program shall offer a yearly benefit to low-income senior
28 citizens and individuals with a disability in the form of a ten percent
29 discount on water utility bills. The fiscal impact of such program shall
30 not be borne by customers and shall not be added to bills rendered by a
31 waterworks corporation or municipal water system to customers.

32 (b) A waterworks corporation or municipal water system which offers
33 such discount program shall conspicuously advertise the availability and
34 amount of such discount on the website of such waterworks corporations
35 or municipal water system. The availability and amount of such discount
36 shall also be conspicuously advertised on the accessibility page of the
37 website of such waterworks corporation or municipal water system.

38 2. For the purposes of this section:

39 (a) "individuals with a disability" shall mean a primary named tele-
40 phone service accountholder (i) with a disability, as defined in subdi-
41 vision twenty-one of section two hundred ninety-two of the executive
42 law; and (ii) who has had a total household income of less than fifty
43 thousand dollars for the most recent two consecutive income tax years
44 beginning in two thousand nineteen, as verified by the department of
45 taxation and finance; and (iii) who is currently receiving (A) social
46 security disability insurance (SSDI), (B) supplemental security income
47 (SSI) benefits under the federal social security act, (C) disability
48 pension or disability compensation benefits provided by the United
49 States department of veterans affairs, (D) disability pension or disa-
50 bility compensation benefits provided by the United States Postal
51 Service, or (E) those previously eligible by virtue of receiving disa-
52 bility benefits under the supplemental security income program or the
53 social security disability program and currently receiving medical
54 assistance benefits based on determination of disability as provided in
55 section three hundred sixty-six of the social services law; and

(b) "low-income senior citizen" shall mean a primary named telephone service account holder who (i) is at least sixty-five years of age; and (ii) either (A) has had a total household income of less than fifty thousand dollars for two consecutive income tax years beginning in two thousand nineteen, as verified by the department of taxation and finance; or (B) is annually eligible to receive assistance under the emergency rental assistance program (ERAP) or the home energy assistance program (HEAP).

§ 3. The public service law is amended by adding a new section 91-b to read as follows:

§ 91-b. Telephone discount program. 1. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the commission is authorized and directed to require a telephone corporation to establish a discount program for low-income senior citizens and individuals with a disability no later than ninety days after the effective date of this section. Such program shall offer a yearly benefit to low-income senior citizens and individuals with a disability in the form of a ten percent discount on telephone bills. The fiscal impact of such program shall not be borne by customers and shall not be added to bills rendered by a telephone corporation to customers.

(b) A telephone corporation which offers such discount program shall conspicuously advertise the availability and amount of such discount on the website of such telephone corporation. The availability and amount of such discount shall also be conspicuously advertised on the accessibility page of the website of such telephone corporation.

(c) Participation in the federal government's affordable connectivity program shall satisfy the telephone corporation's obligation to establish a discount program under paragraph (a) of this subdivision.

(d) Before applying a discount under paragraph (a) of this subdivision, a telephone corporation may require proof of eligibility from the primary named account holder for the calendar year in which the discount is sought.

2. For the purposes of this section:

(a) "individuals with a disability" shall mean a primary named telephone service account holder (i) with a disability, as defined in subdivision twenty-one of section two hundred ninety-two of the executive law; and (ii) who has had a total household income of less than fifty thousand dollars for the most recent two consecutive income tax years beginning in two thousand nineteen, as verified by the department of taxation and finance; and (iii) who is currently receiving (A) social security disability insurance (SSDI), (B) supplemental security income (SSI) benefits under the federal social security act, (C) disability pension or disability compensation benefits provided by the United States department of veterans affairs, (D) disability pension or disability compensation benefits provided by the United States Postal Service, or (E) those previously eligible by virtue of receiving disability benefits under the supplemental security income program or the social security disability program and currently receiving medical assistance benefits based on determination of disability as provided in section three hundred sixty-six of the social services law; and

(b) "low-income senior citizen" shall mean a primary named telephone service account holder who (i) is at least sixty-five years of age; and (ii) either (A) has had a total household income of less than fifty thousand dollars for two consecutive income tax years beginning in two thousand nineteen, as verified by the department of taxation and finance; or (B) is annually eligible to receive assistance under the

1 emergency rental assistance program (ERAP) or the home energy assist-
2 ance program (HEAP).

3 § 4. The public service law is amended by adding a new section 224-d
4 to read as follows:

5 § 224-d. Cable discount program. 1. (a) Notwithstanding any other
6 provision of law, the commission is authorized and directed to require a
7 telephone corporation, as defined in subdivision seventeen of section
8 two of this chapter, and a cable television company, as defined in
9 section two hundred twelve of this article, that provides cable service
10 to customers in New York, to establish a discount program for low-income
11 senior citizens and individuals with a disability no later than ninety
12 days after the effective date of this section. Such program shall offer
13 a yearly benefit to low-income senior citizens and individuals with a
14 disability in the form of a ten percent discount on cable bills. The
15 fiscal impact of such program shall not be borne by customers and shall
16 not be added to bills rendered by a telephone corporation or cable tele-
17 vision company to customers.

18 (b) A telephone corporation or cable television company which offers
19 such discount program shall conspicuously advertise the availability and
20 amount of such discount on the website of such telephone corporation or
21 cable television company. The availability and amount of such discount
22 shall also be conspicuously advertised on the accessibility page of the
23 website of such telephone corporation or cable television company.

24 (c) Participation in the federal government's affordable connectivity
25 program shall satisfy the telephone corporation's or cable television
26 company's obligation to establish a discount program under paragraph (a)
27 of this subdivision.

28 (d) Before applying a discount under paragraph (a) of this subdivi-
29 sion, a telephone corporation or cable television company may require
30 proof of eligibility from the primary named accountholder for the calen-
31 dar year in which the discount is sought.

32 2. For the purposes of this section:

33 (a) "individuals with a disability" shall mean a primary named tele-
34 phone service accountholder (i) with a disability, as defined in subdivi-
35 sion twenty-one of section two hundred ninety-two of the executive
36 law; and (ii) who has had a total household income of less than fifty
37 thousand dollars for the most recent two consecutive income tax years
38 beginning in two thousand nineteen, as verified by the department of
39 taxation and finance; and (iii) who is currently receiving (A) social
40 security disability insurance (SSDI), (B) supplemental security income
41 (SSI) benefits under the federal social security act, (C) disability
42 pension or disability compensation benefits provided by the United
43 States department of veterans affairs, (D) disability pension or disa-
44 bility compensation benefits provided by the United States Postal
45 Service, or (E) those previously eligible by virtue of receiving disa-
46 bility benefits under the supplemental security income program or the
47 social security disability program and currently receiving medical
48 assistance benefits based on determination of disability as provided in
49 section three hundred sixty-six of the social services law; and

50 (b) "low-income senior citizen" shall mean a primary named telephone
51 service accountholder who (i) is at least sixty-five years of age; and
52 (ii) either (A) has had a total household income of less than fifty
53 thousand dollars for two consecutive income tax years beginning in two
54 thousand nineteen, as verified by the department of taxation and
55 finance; or (B) is annually eligible to receive assistance under the

1 emergency rental assistance program (ERAP) or the home energy assistance
2 program (HEAP).
3 § 5. This act shall take effect immediately.