

STATE OF NEW YORK

7475

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

May 24, 2023

Introduced by M. of A. CUNNINGHAM -- read once and referred to the Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions

AN ACT to amend the public service law, in relation to establishing discount programs for veterans

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

1 Section 1. The public service law is amended by adding a new section
2 66-w to read as follows:

3 § 66-w. Utility discount program. 1. (a) Notwithstanding any other
4 provision of law, the commission is authorized and directed to require a
5 gas corporation, electric corporation or municipality to establish a
6 discount program for veterans no later than ninety days after the effec-
7 tive date of this section. Such program shall offer a yearly benefit to
8 veterans in the form of a ten percent discount on utility bills. The
9 fiscal impact of such program shall not be borne by customers and shall
10 not be added to bills rendered by a gas corporation, electric corpo-
11 ration or municipality to customers.

12 (b) A gas corporation, electric corporation or municipality which
13 offers such discount program shall conspicuously advertise the avail-
14 ability and amount of such discount on the website of such gas corpo-
15 ration, electric corporation or municipality. The availability and
16 amount of such discount shall also be conspicuously advertised on the
17 accessibility page of the website of such gas corporation, electric
18 corporation or municipality.

19 2. (a) For the purposes of this section, "veteran" shall mean a resi-
20 dent of the state who (i) is the primary named utility service account-
21 holder; (ii) has had a total household income of less than fifty thou-
22 sand dollars for the most recent two consecutive income tax years
23 beginning in two thousand twenty, as verified by the department of taxa-
24 tion and finance; and (iii) served in and who received any honorable or
25 general discharge from the United States army, navy, air force, marine

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

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corps, coast guard and/or the reserves thereof, and/or the army national guard, air national guard, New York guard or New York naval militia.

(b) A primary named utility service accountholder shall provide the gas corporation, electric corporation or municipality an authenticated copy of his or her discharge papers to be eligible for such discount to demonstrate eligibility under paragraph (a) of this subdivision.

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

§ 89-q. Water discount program. 1. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the commission is authorized and directed to require waterworks corporations and municipal water systems to establish a discount program for veterans no later than ninety days after the effective date of this section. Such program shall offer a yearly benefit to veterans in the form of a ten percent discount on water utility bills. The fiscal impact of such program shall not be borne by customers and shall not be added to bills rendered by a waterworks corporation or municipal water system to customers.

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

2. (a) For the purposes of this section, "veteran" shall mean a resident of the state who (i) is the primary named waterworks or municipal water system service accountholder; (ii) 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 twenty, as verified by the department of taxation and finance; and (iii) served in and who received any honorable or general discharge from the United States army, navy, air force, marine corps, coast guard and/or the reserves thereof, and/or the army national guard, air national guard, New York guard or New York naval militia.

(b) A primary named waterworks or municipal water system service accountholder shall provide the waterworks corporation or municipal water system an authenticated copy of his or her discharge papers to be eligible for such discount to demonstrate eligibility under paragraph (a) of this subdivision.

§ 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 veterans no later than ninety days after the effective date of this section. Such program shall offer a yearly benefit to veterans 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 Lifeline or Affordable Connectivity program, or any successor program the commission shall deem

1 sufficient, shall satisfy the telephone corporation's or cable tele-
2 vision company's obligation to establish a discount program under para-
3 graph (a) of this subdivision, unless the commission deems it insuffi-
4 cient to satisfy such requirements.

5 (d) Before applying a discount under paragraph (a) of this subdivi-
6 sion, a telephone corporation may require proof of eligibility from the
7 primary named telephone service accountholder for the calendar year in
8 which the discount is sought.

9 2. (a) For the purposes of this section, "veteran" shall mean a resi-
10 dent of the state who (i) is the primary named telephone service
11 accountholder; (ii) has had a total household income of less than fifty
12 thousand dollars for the most recent two consecutive income tax years
13 beginning in two thousand twenty, as verified by the department of taxa-
14 tion and finance; and (iii) served in and who received any honorable or
15 general discharge from the United States army, navy, air force, marine
16 corps, coast guard and/or the reserves thereof, and/or the army national
17 guard, air national guard, New York guard or New York naval militia.

18 (b) A primary named telephone service accountholder shall provide the
19 telephone corporation an authenticated copy of his or her discharge
20 papers to be eligible for such discount to demonstrate eligibility under
21 paragraph (a) of this subdivision.

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

24 § 224-d. Cable discount program. 1. (a) Notwithstanding any other
25 provision of law, the commission is authorized and directed to require a
26 telephone corporation, as defined in subdivision seventeen of section
27 two of this chapter, and a cable television company, as defined in
28 section two hundred twelve of this article, that provides cable service
29 to customers in New York, to establish a discount program for veterans
30 no later than ninety days after the effective date of this section. Such
31 program shall offer a yearly benefit to veterans in the form of a ten
32 percent discount on cable bills. The fiscal impact of such program shall
33 not be borne by customers and shall not be added to bills rendered by a
34 telephone corporation or cable television company to customers.

35 (b) A telephone corporation or cable television company which offers
36 such discount program shall conspicuously advertise the availability and
37 amount of such discount on the website of such telephone corporation or
38 cable television company. The availability and amount of such discount
39 shall also be conspicuously advertised on the accessibility page of the
40 website of such telephone corporation or cable television company.

41 (c) Participation in the federal government's Lifeline or Affordable
42 Connectivity program, or any successor program the commission shall deem
43 sufficient, shall satisfy the telephone corporation's or cable tele-
44 vision company's obligation to establish a discount program under para-
45 graph (a) of this subdivision, unless the commission deems it insuffi-
46 cient to satisfy such requirements.

47 (d) Before applying a discount under paragraph (a) of this subdivi-
48 sion, a telephone corporation or cable television company may require
49 proof of eligibility from the primary named cable service accountholder
50 for the calendar year in which the discount is sought.

51 2. (a) For the purposes of this section, "veteran" shall mean a resi-
52 dent of the state who (i) is the primary named cable service account-
53 holder; (ii) has had a total household income of less than fifty thou-
54 sand dollars for the most recent two consecutive income tax years
55 beginning in two thousand twenty, as verified by the department of taxa-
56 tion and finance; and (iii) received any honorable or general discharge

1 from the United States army, navy, air force, marine corps, coast guard
2 and/or the reserves thereof, and/or the army national guard, air
3 national guard, New York guard or New York naval militia.

4 (b) A primary named cable service accountholder shall provide the
5 telephone corporation or the cable television company an authenticated
6 copy of his or her discharge papers to be eligible for such discount to
7 demonstrate eligibility under paragraph (a) of this subdivision.

8 § 5. This act shall take effect immediately.