

STATE OF NEW YORK

1201--A

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2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 10, 2023

Introduced by Sens. PARKER, ADDABBO, COMRIE, HINCHEY -- 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, passed by Senate and delivered to the Assembly, recalled, vote reconsidered, restored to 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 veterans

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-w to read as follows:

§ 66-w. 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 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 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. (a) For the purposes of this section, "veteran" shall mean a resident of the state who (i) is the primary named utility service account-

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

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holder; (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 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

1 the website of such telephone corporation. The availability and amount
2 of such discount shall also be conspicuously advertised on the accessi-
3 bility page of the website of such telephone corporation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

40 (b) A telephone corporation or cable television company which offers
41 such discount program shall conspicuously advertise the availability and
42 amount of such discount on the website of such telephone corporation or
43 cable television company. The availability and amount of such discount
44 shall also be conspicuously advertised on the accessibility page of the
45 website of such telephone corporation or cable television company.

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

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

1 2. (a) For the purposes of this section, "veteran" shall mean a resi-
2 dent of the state who (i) is the primary named cable service account-
3 holder; (ii) has had a total household income of less than fifty thou-
4 sand dollars for the most recent two consecutive income tax years
5 beginning in two thousand twenty, as verified by the department of taxa-
6 tion and finance; and (iii) received any honorable or general discharge
7 from the United States army, navy, air force, marine corps, coast guard
8 and/or the reserves thereof, and/or the army national guard, air
9 national guard, New York guard or New York naval militia.

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

14 § 5. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after
15 it shall have become a law.