

48: 2-29.18 et al

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY CHECKLIST

NJSA 48:2-29.18 et al. (Utility cost assistance - renters who do not pay their own utility bills--include)

LAWS 1981 CHAPTER 210

Bill No. A2187

Sponsor(s) Van Wagner

Date Introduced Oct. 16, 1980

Committee: Assembly Revenue, Finance and Appropriations

Senate Revenue, Finance and Appropriations

Amended during passage Yes ~~No~~ Amendments during passage denoted by asterisks

Date of Passage: Assembly March 2, 1981

Senate June 25, 1981

Date of approval July 20, 1981

Following statements are attached if available:

Sponsor statement Yes ~~No~~

Committee Statement: Assembly Yes ~~No~~

Senate Yes ~~No~~

Fiscal Note ~~Yes~~ No

Veto Message ~~Yes~~ No

Message on signing Yes ~~No~~

Following were printed:

Reports Yes ~~No~~

Hearings ~~Yes~~ No

Report referred to in section 7 of act:

974.901 Lifeline Credit Program annual report.  
L722 State of New Jersey, Department of Human Services, Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services, 1980/81. Trenton, 1981.

6/22/81

210  
7-20-81

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ASSEMBLY, No. 2187

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 16, 1980

By Assemblyman VAN WAGNER

Referred to Committee on Revenue, Finance and Appropriations

AN ACT concerning utility cost relief for certain tenants, supplementing Title 48 of the Revised Statutes, and \*making an appropriation\* \*amending P. L. 1979, c. 197\*.

1 BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
2 of New Jersey:

1 1. The Legislature hereby finds and declares that the extra-  
2 ordinary and unprecedented energy costs in recent years have had  
3 a deleterious financial impact on senior citizens and disabled resi-  
4 dents in this State, many of whom must meet their regular living  
5 expenses on fixed incomes; that the voters of this State recognized  
6 the seriousness of this situation in 1976 by approving an amend-  
7 ment to the Constitution of the State of New Jersey which provides  
8 that all State revenues derived from the taxation of gambling  
9 establishments in Atlantic City be dedicated to reducing the prop-  
10 erty taxes, rentals, telephone, gas, electric, and municipal utility  
11 charges of eligible senior citizens and disabled residents; and, that  
12 in 1979 this Legislature created the "Lifeline Credit Program,"  
13 which utilizes casino revenues to provide eligible senior citizens  
14 and disabled residents who are residential electric or gas customers  
15 with a credit against their utility charges.

16 The Legislature further finds and declares that many of the  
17 senior citizens and disabled residents in this State live in accom-  
18 modations where they do not receive an individual utility bill, and  
19 therefore are not eligible for the "Lifeline Credit Program," even  
20 though they meet all the other requirements of the program; and,  
21 that these citizens, no less than those who receive individual utility  
22 bills, deserve financial relief from burdensome energy costs.

23 The Legislature, therefore, determines that it serves a public  
24 purpose, and is consistent with the provisions of the Constitution  
25 of the State of New Jersey, to establish a tenants lifeline assistance

**EXPLANATION—Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.**

26 program, and to fund such a program with revenues derived from  
27 the taxation of casinos.

1 2. The Commissioner of the Department of Human Services,  
2 hereinafter referred to as the commissioner, shall establish and  
3 administer a program which shall be known as the "Tenants Life-  
4 line Assistance Program."

1 3. Any residential tenant not receiving an individual electric or  
2 gas utility bill who at any time between July 1 and December 31,  
3 \***[1980]**\* \*1981\*, or at any time between July 1 and December 31 of  
4 any year thereafter, is: a. enrolled in, found eligible for, or, except  
5 for the provisions of section 4 of P. L. 1975, c. 194 (C. 30:4D-23),  
6 would be eligible for benefits under the program of "Pharmaceutical  
7 Assistance to the Aged," established pursuant to P. L. 1975, c. 194  
8 (C. 30:4D-20 et seq.), as amended and supplemented or, b. receiv-  
9 ing or is eligible to receive benefits under the program of Supple-  
10 mentary Security Income (P. L. 1973, c. 256, C. 44:7-85 et seq.); or,  
11 c., receiving disability benefits pursuant to the Federal Social  
12 Security Act (42 U. S. C. 416 (i)) and meets the income and resi-  
13 dency requirements of the "Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged"  
14 program, shall be eligible for the "Tenants Lifeline Assistance Pro-  
15 gram." The commissioner shall establish a schedule of eligible  
16 residential tenants who meet such qualification. For the purposes  
17 of this act, "residential tenant" means a person renting or leasing  
18 real property \***[for residential purposes on a permanent basis]**\*  
19 \*, including a mobil home parksite as his principal residence\*, in-  
19A cluding a net lease residential tenant, as well as a person who is a  
20 resident shareholder in a nonprofit residential cooperative or  
21 mutual housing corporations, both defined pursuant to P. L. 1977,  
22 c. 241 (C. 54:4-3.80 et seq.), or an owner of a condominium as such  
23 is defined pursuant to P. L. 1963, c. 168 (C. 46:8A-1 et seq.) and  
24 P. L. 1969, c. 257 (C. 46:8B-1 et seq.).

1 4. Any residential tenant found eligible for the "Tenants Life-  
2 line Assistance Program" shall be entitled to an annual tenants  
3 assistance payment, except as otherwise provided herein, at his  
4 principal residence. No household or rental unit, as appropriate,  
5 shall receive more than one tenants assistance payment for any  
6 fiscal year. \*No household shall receive during the same fiscal year  
7 both a tenants assistance payment and a lifeline credit allowed  
8 pursuant to P. L. 1979, c. 197 (C. 48:2-29.15 et seq.).\* \***[The ten-**  
9 **ants assistance payment shall be \$125.00 for fiscal year 1980-81.]**\*  
10 Subject to the availability of appropriations, the tenants assistance  
11 payment shall be \***[increased to]**\* \$150.00 beginning in October  
12 1981.

1 5. a. Upon certification by the commissioner, the State Treasurer  
 2 shall issue a tenants assistance payment to each residential tenant  
 3 found eligible for the "Tenants Lifeline Assistance Program." **["**\*For  
 4 residential tenants found eligible on or before December 31, 1980,  
 5 the tenants assistance payment shall be made as soon as practicable  
 6 and during October of each year thereafter for which eligibility is  
 7 determined.**"]**\* For residential tenants found eligible between July 1  
 8 and December 31 of 1981 or any year thereafter, the tenants  
 9 assistance payment shall be made during October, or as soon as  
 10 practicable after eligibility has been determined, and during  
 11 October of each year thereafter for which eligibility is determined.

12 b. For eligible residential tenants receiving **["**or eligible to re-  
 13 ceive**"]**\* benefits pursuant to the program of Supplementary Secur-  
 14 ity Income under P. L. 1973, c. 256 (C. 44:7-85 et seq.), the tenants  
 15 assistance payment shall consist of a special State utility supple-  
 16 ment to the Supplementary Security Income program and shall be  
 17 made in twelve monthly installments. This special State utility  
 18 supplement shall be in addition to existing supplementary pay-  
 19 ments which have been or may be authorized and made pursuant to  
 20 P. L. 1973, c. 256 (C. 44:7-85 et seq.).

1 6. a. The commissioner is authorized to promulgate, pursuant  
 2 to law, such rules and regulations as may be necessary to effectuate  
 3 the purpose of this act.

4 b. The commissioner shall be entitled to call upon the assistance,  
 5 or contract for the services, of any State department, board, bureau,  
 6 commission or agency as may be necessary to implement the pro-  
 7 visions of this act.

1 7. The commissioner shall submit a report on the "Tenants Life-  
 2 line Assistance Program" to the Legislature and the Governor on  
 3 **["**March**"]**\* *August*\* 15 of each year, in conjunction with the an-  
 4 nual report submitted on the "Lifeline Credit Program," pursuant  
 5 to P. L. 1979, c. 197 (C. 48:2-29.15 et seq.). Such report shall  
 6 include, but shall not be limited to, a summary of the implementation  
 7 of the program, a study of its impact, any recommendations for  
 8 its revision, and an estimate of the practicability and feasibility of  
 9 expanding the program to include other needy residential electric  
 10 and gas utility customers.

1 8. **["**There is appropriated to the Department of Human Services  
 2 from the revenues deposited in the Casino Revenue Fund estab-  
 3 lished pursuant to section 145 of P. L. 1977, c. 110 (C. 5:12-145)  
 4 the sum of \$19,000,000.00 to effectuate the provisions and purposes  
 5 of this act.**"]**\* *Section 4* of P. L. 1979, c. 197 (C. 48:2-29.18) is  
 6 amended to read as follows:

7 4. Upon certification by the Commissioner of the Department  
 8 of Human Services, the State Treasurer shall pay to each electric  
 9 and gas utility the amount of the credit provided for each eligible  
 10 residential customer served by such utility. The payments shall be  
 11 made pursuant to a schedule approved by the Director of the  
 12 Division of Budget and Accounting and payments made for unused  
 13 credit shall be returned to the Casino Revenue Fund pursuant to  
 14 a plan approved by him. *For eligible residential customers receiv-*  
 15 *ing benefits pursuant to the program of Supplementary Security*  
 16 *Income under P. L. 1973 c. 256 (C. 44:7-85 et seq.), the credit shall*  
 17 *consist of a special State Utility supplement to the Supplementary*  
 18 *Security Income program and shall be made in 12 monthly in-*  
 19 *stallments. This special State utility supplement shall be in addi-*  
 20 *tion to existing supplementary payments which have been or may*  
 21 *be authorized and made pursuant to P. L. 1973, c. 256 (C. 44:7-85*  
 22 *et seq.).\**

1 \*9. Section 7 of P. L. 1979, c. 197 (C. 48:2-29.21) is amended to  
 2 read as follows:

3 7. The Commissioner of the Department of Human Services  
 4 shall submit a report on the "Lifeline Credit Program" to the  
 5 Legislature on ~~March~~ August 15, 1981, and annually thereafter.  
 6 Such report shall include, but shall not be limited to, a summary  
 7 of the implementation of the program, a study of its impact, any  
 8 recommendations for its revision, and an estimate of the practi-  
 9 cability and feasibility of expanding the program to include other  
 10 needy residential electric and gas utility customers. The report  
 11 shall also include an examination of alternative revenue sources  
 12 to fund such a program.\*

1 \*~~9.~~\* \*10.\* This act shall take effect immediately.

7 determined. For residential tenants found eligible between July 1  
8 and December 31 of 1981 or any year thereafter, the tenants  
9 assistance payment shall be made during October, or as soon as  
10 practicable after eligibility has been determined, and during  
11 October of each year thereafter for which eligibility is determined.

12 b. For eligible residential tenants receiving or eligible to receive  
13 benefits pursuant to the program of Supplementary Security In-  
14 come under P. L. 1973, c. 256 (C. 44:7-85 et seq.), the tenants  
15 assistance payment shall consist of a special State utility supple-  
16 ment to the Supplementary Security Income program and shall be  
17 made in twelve monthly installments. This special State utility  
18 supplement shall be in addition to existing supplementary pay-  
19 ments which have been or may be authorized and made pursuant to  
20 P. L. 1973, c. 256 (C. 44:7-85 et seq.).

1 6. a. The commissioner is authorized to promulgate, pursuant  
2 to law, such rules and regulations as may be necessary to effectuate  
3 the purpose of this act.

4 b. The commissioner shall be entitled to call upon the assistance,  
5 or contract for the services, of any State department, board, bureau,  
6 commission or agency as may be necessary to implement the pro-  
7 visions of this act.

1 7. The commissioner shall submit a report on the "Tenants Life-  
2 line Assistance Program" to the Legislature and the Governor on  
3 March 15 of each year, in conjunction with the annual report sub-  
4 mitted on the "Lifeline Credit Program," pursuant to P. L. 1979,  
5 c. 197 (C. 48:2-29.15 et seq.). Such report shall include, but shall  
6 not be limited to, a summary of the implementation of the program,  
7 a study of its impact, any recommendations for its revision, and  
8 an estimate of the practicability and feasibility of expanding the  
9 program to include other needy residential electric and gas utility  
10 customers.

1 8. There is appropriated to the Department of Human Services  
2 from the revenues deposited in the Casino Revenue Fund estab-  
3 lished pursuant to section 145 of P. L. 1977, c. 110 (C. 5:12-145)  
4 the sum of \$19,000,000.00 to effectuate the provisions and purposes  
5 of this act.

1 9. This act shall take effect immediately.

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#### STATEMENT

This bill would provide utility cost assistance to renters and other residents who do not qualify for the "Lifeline Credit Program" only

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because they do not pay their own utility bills. Like the Lifeline legislation, this bill creates a program which would provide \$125.00 to each household in which there was an eligible senior citizen or disabled person. This amount would be increased to \$150.00 in the 1981-82 fiscal year if sufficient funds are available.

Approximately 150,000 households are expected to be eligible for the \$125.00 check this year. The bill appropriates \$19,000,000.00 from the Casino Revenue Fund for the purposes of this act. Because those who would be eligible have already been identified by the Department of Human Services, the administrative costs should be minimal.

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ASSEMBLY REVENUE, FINANCE AND APPROPRIATIONS  
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO  
**ASSEMBLY, No. 2187**  
with committee amendments

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: FEBRUARY 19, 1981

This bill establishes the "Tenants Lifeline Assistance Program," extending utility cost assistance to an estimated 150,000 households which are occupied by senior or disabled citizens otherwise qualified for the current lifeline credit program except that they do not receive individual electric or gas utility bills.

The program would make available to eligible senior and disabled citizen tenants an annual payment of \$150.00 beginning in October, 1981.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

Committee amendments are largely procedural amendments and specify:

1. The first payment date to be October, 1981 in the amount of \$150.00;
2. the payment method for both the current and newly established program for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to be a utility supplement to the monthly SSI check;
3. that August 1 annually shall be the date on which the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services is required to report to the Governor and Legislature on the implementation, impact, and any recommended revisions for both the existing "Lifeline Credit Program" and the "Tenants Lifeline Assistance Program."

Further committee amendments delete the appropriation of \$19,000,000.00 for the "Tenants Lifeline Assistance Program." The funding for this program is provided for in the Governor's recommended budget for fiscal year 1981-82.



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SENATE REVENUE, FINANCE AND APPROPRIATIONS  
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO  
ASSEMBLY, No. 2187  
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STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 15, 1981

The Senate Revenue, Finance and Appropriations Committee concurs with the statement prepared by the Assembly Revenue, Finance and Appropriations Committee.

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

JULY 20, 1981

KATHRYN FORSYTH

Governor Brendan Byrne today signed a bill establishing the "Tenants Lifeline Assistance Program," which provides \$150 annual payments to disabled and senior citizen tenants who do not receive individual utility bills and are therefore excluded from the Lifeline Credit Program.

The bill, A-2187, was sponsored by Assemblyman Richard Van Wagner (D-Monmouth). The Governor signed the measure in a public ceremony in his office.

Senior citizens and disabled people who have an individual annual income of \$9,000 or less, or, if they are married, a combined annual income of less than \$12,000 are eligible for the new program.

Tenants who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and who do not receive individual utility bills are also eligible.

No household or rental unit may receive more than one payment, nor can a household or rental unit receive both a tenants Lifeline Assistance Payment and a Lifeline Credit.

The bill also provides that SSI recipients, whether eligible under this program or Lifeline Credit, will receive the payment in 12 monthly supplements to their SSI checks.

A-2187 carries a \$28 million appropriation for FY 1982. The money comes from the Casino Revenue Fund.

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