

48:2-29.15 — 48:2-29.22

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY CHECKLIST

NJSA 48:2-29.15 - 48:2-29.22 ("Lifeline credit program"--raises credit--transfers jurisdiction)

LAWS 1980 CHAPTER 92

Bill No. A1837

Sponsor(s) Doyle

Date Introduced June 12, 1980

Committee: Assembly Revenue, Finance & Appropriations

Senate -----

Amended during passage Yes  No  Amendments during passage denoted by asterisks

Date of Passage: Assembly June 23, 1980

Senate July 28, 1980

Date of approval Aug. 26, 1980

Following statements are attached if available:

Sponsor statement Yes  No

Committee Statement: Assembly Yes  No

Senate  No

Fiscal Note  No

Veto Message  No

Message on signing Yes  No

Following were printed:

Reports  No

Hearings  No

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ASSEMBLY, No. 1837

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED JUNE 12, 1980

By Assemblyman DOYLE

Referred to Committee on Revenue, Finance and Appropriations

AN ACT to amend the title of "An act concerning electric and gas utilities, supplementing Title 48 of the Revised Statutes, making an appropriation and repealing P. L. 1977, c. 440," approved September 18, 1979 (P. L. 1979, c. 197, C. 48:2-29.15 et seq.), so that the same shall read "An act concerning electric and gas utility bill credits, supplementing Title 48 of the Revised Statutes, providing for the transfer of the administration of the 'Lifeline Credit Program' to the Department of Human Services, making an appropriation and repealing P. L. 1977, c. 440," and amending and supplementing the body of said act.

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

1 1. The title of P. L. 1979, c. 197 (C. 48:2-29.15 et seq.) is amended  
2 to read as follows: An act concerning electric and gas **[utilities]**  
3 *utility bill credits*, supplementing Title 48 of the Revised Statutes,  
4 *providing for the transfer of the administration of the "Lifeline*  
5 *Credit Program" to the Department of Human Services*, making  
6 an appropriation and repealing P. L. 1977, c. 440.

1 2. Section 1 of P. L. 1979, c. 197 (C. 48:2-29.15) is amended to  
2 read as follows:

3 **[The Board of Public Utilities]** *The Commissioner of the De-*  
4 *partment of Human Services* shall **[establish]** *administer* a pro-  
5 gram which shall be known as the "Lifeline Credit Program."

1 3. Section 2 of P. L. 1979, c. 197 (C. 48:2-29.16) is amended  
2 to read as follows:

3 2. **[Any residential electric or gas customer:** a. who is currently  
4 enrolled in, or applies during the remainder of the 1979 calendar  
5 year and is found eligible for, the program of "Pharmaceutical  
6 Assistance to the Aged," established pursuant to P. L. 1975, c. 194

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

7 (C. 30:4D-20 et seq.), as amended and supplemented; or, b. who  
 8 is currently receiving, or who receives during the remainder of  
 9 the 1979 calendar year, benefits under the program of Supple-  
 10 mental Security Income (P. L. 1973, c. 256, C. 44:7-85 et seq.),  
 11 or c. who is defined as disabled pursuant to the Federal Social  
 12 Security Act (42 U. S. C. section 416(i)) and satisfies the income  
 13 eligibility requirements for the Pharmaceutical Assistance to the  
 14 Aged program,] *Any residential electric or gas customer who on*  
 15 *July 1 of any year or at anytime during the succeeding 6 months*  
 16 *is: a. enrolled in, found eligible for, or, except for the provisions*  
 17 *of section 4 of P. L. 1975, c. 194 (C. 30:4D-23), would be eligible*  
 18 *for benefits under the program of "Pharmaceutical Assistance to*  
 19 *the Aged," established pursuant to P. L. 1975, c. 194 (C. 30:4D-20*  
 20 *et seq.), as amended and supplemented; or, b. receiving or is eligi-*  
 21 *ble to receive benefits under the program of Supplementary Secur-*  
 22 *ity Income (P. L. 1973, c. 256, C. 44:7-85 et seq.); or, c., receiving*  
 23 *disability benefits pursuant to the Federal Social Security Act*  
 24 *(42 U. S. C. 416 (i)) and meets the income and residency require-*  
 25 *ments of the "Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged" program,*  
 26 *shall be eligible for the "Lifeline Credit Program" established by*  
 27 *this act.*

28 **【The Board of Public Utilities】** *The Commissioner of the De-*  
 29 *partment of Human Services shall establish a schedule of eligible*  
 30 *customers who meet such qualifications.*

1 4. Section 3 of P. L. 1979, c. 197 (C. 48:2-29.17) is amended  
 2 to read as follows:

3 3. The "Lifeline Credit Program" shall consist of a credit of  
 4 **【\$100.00】** *\$125.00* against the electric or gas utility bill of each  
 5 eligible residential electric or gas customer at his principal resi-  
 6 dence. Such credit shall be applied to the electric or gas utility  
 7 bills of such customer as soon as may be practicable, but in no case  
 8 later than the bills issued in October**【, 1979,】** *of each year* or as  
 9 soon thereafter as eligibility is determined, and shall be applied  
 10 to each subsequent utility bill after the first until the full amount  
 11 of the credit is exhausted. No household shall receive more than  
 12 **【\$100.00】** *\$125.00* credit. In the event that electric and gas are  
 13 provided to the same customer by the same utility, **【a】** *the total*  
 14 *annual credit 【of \$100.00】 shall be applied to the combined bills*  
 15 *from such utility. In the event that electric and gas are provided*  
 16 *to the same customer by two separate utilities, 【a】 half of the*  
 17 *total annual credit 【of \$50.00】 shall be applied to the bills from*  
 18 *each such utility. 【Subject to the availability of appropriations,*  
 19 *the level of credit shall be increased to \$125.00 beginning in Oc-*

20 tober, 1980.】 *\*Subject to the availability of appropriations, the*  
 21 *level of credit shall be increased to \$150.00 beginning in October,*  
 22 *1981.\**

1 5. Section 4 of P. L. 1979, c. 197 (C. 48:2-29.18) is amended  
 2 to read as follows:

3 4. Upon certification by the [President of the Board of Public  
 4 Utilities] *Commissioner of the Department of Human Services,*  
 5 the State Treasurer shall pay to each electric and gas utility the  
 6 amount of the credit provided for each eligible residential customer  
 7 served by such utility. The payments shall be made pursuant to  
 8 a schedule approved by [the President and] the Director of the  
 9 Division of Budget and Accounting and payments made for unused  
 10 credit shall be returned to the Casino Revenue Fund pursuant to  
 11 a plan approved by \*【them】\* *\*him\*.*

1 6. Section 5 of P. L. 1979, c. 197 (C. 48:2-29.19) is amended  
 2 to read as follows:

3 5. a. The [Board of Public Utilities] *Commissioner of the De-*  
 4 *partment of Human Services* is authorized to promulgate, pursuant  
 5 to law, such rules and regulations as [it] *he* may deem necessary  
 6 to effectuate the purposes of this act.

7 b. The [board] *commissioner* shall be entitled to call [to its]  
 8 *upon the* assistance, [avail itself,] or contract for the services, of  
 9 any State department, board, bureau, commission, or agency [it]  
 10 *as may* [deem] *be* necessary to implement the provisions of this  
 11 act.

1 7. Section 6 of P. L. 1979, c. 197 (C. 48:2-29.20) is amended  
 2 to read as follows:

3 6. [Each electric and gas utility shall, by separate notice, inform  
 4 each eligible residential customer of the "Lifeline Credit Pro-  
 5 gram." The time of mailing and the content of such notice shall  
 6 be approved by the Board of Public Utilities] *The Commissioner*  
 7 *of the Department of Human Services is authorized to direct each*  
 8 *electric and gas utility to inform each eligible residential customer*  
 9 *of the "Lifeline Credit Program" by separate notice. The commis-*  
 10 *sioner shall approve the content of any such notice. Prior to issuing*  
 11 *any such direction to a utility, and prior to approving any such*  
 12 *notice, the commissioner shall consult with the President of the*  
 13 *Board of Public Utilities.*

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

3 7. The [board] *Commissioner of the Department of Human*  
 4 *Services* shall submit a report on the "Lifeline Credit Program"

5 to the Legislature on March 15, ~~[1980]~~ 1981, and annually there-  
6 after. Such report shall include, but shall not be limited to, a  
7 summary of the implementation of the program, a study of its  
8 impact, any recommendations for its revision, and an estimate of  
9 the practicability and feasibility of expanding the program to in-  
10 clude other needy residential electric and gas utility customers.  
11 The report shall also include an examination of alternative revenue  
12 sources to fund such a program.

1 9. (New section) The responsibility for the administration of  
2 the "Lifeline Credit Program" and all powers and duties in con-  
3 nection therewith is transferred from the Board of Public Utilities  
4 to the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services. The  
5 personnel, records, files, equipment, books, appropriations, grants  
6 and other moneys of the "Lifeline Credit Program" are transferred  
7 from the Board of Public Utilities in the Department of Energy  
8 to the Department of Human Services in accordance with the "State  
9 Agency Transfer Act" P. L. 1971, c. 375 (C. 52:14D-1 et seq.).

1 10. This act shall take effect immediately.

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#### STATEMENT

This bill increases from \$100.00 to \$125.00 the gas and electric utility bill credits provided to eligible senior citizens and disabled persons under the "Lifeline Credit Program." This bill also transfers administrative jurisdiction over the program from the Board of Public Utilities to the Department of Human Services, which has actually had the principal responsibility for implementing the program, and makes purely technical changes in the eligibility criteria for the program.

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August 26, 1980

-2-

- Permit a claimant to request a physician of the same sex for a physical examination.

A-563, sponsored by Assemblyman Herman T. Costello (D-Burlington), which authorizes the Commissioner of Human Services, through the Division of Veterans Programs and Services, to develop a plan for the establishment, operation, maintenance and management by the State of one or more Veterans Cemeteries.

Beverly (in Burlington County), a national cemetery in New Jersey funded by the federal government, has been filled for several years. New Jersey veterans to be buried in a national cemetery must go to Pennsylvania, New York or Maryland. The Veteran's Administration has no plans for opening another national cemetery in New Jersey. However, they will share in the costs of developing State veterans cemeteries.

This bill will provide the basis for developing a plan for a veterans cemetery in New Jersey which could receive matching funds for its establishment and operation. The plan must be approved by the Governor and the Legislature as a prerequisite for federal grants in aid.

A-1837  
~~A-1873~~, sponsored by Assemblyman John Paul Doyle (D-Ocean), which raises the credit under the "Lifeline Credit Program" from \$100 to \$125, and includes a provision to increase the annual Lifeline Credit to \$150 for fiscal year 1982 "subject to the availability of appropriations."

The Lifeline Credit program was enacted last year as a one year experiment with a December 31, 1979 cut-off date for eligibility. It has provided approximately 200,000 households with a \$100 utility credit. This bill makes the program permanent by providing for the application or certification of eligible participants on July 1, and December 31 of each year.

This bill also shifts the administration of the Lifeline Credit Program from the Board of Public Utilities to the Department of Human Services.

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