

48:2-29.15 to 48:2-29.21

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY CHECKLIST

NJSA 48:2-29.15 to 48:2-29.21; repeals (Senior citizens - disabled - Lifeline credit program)
48:2-29.6 - 48:2-29.14

LAWS 1979 CHAPTER 197

Bill No. A3601

Sponsor(s) Doyle and others

Date Introduced August 23, 1979

Committee: Assembly -----

Senate -----

Amended during passage Yes No

Date of Passage: Assembly Aug. 23, 1979

Senate Sept. 10, 1979

Date of approval Sept. 18, 1979

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 mentioned in sponsors' statement:

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

Similar bill proposed A3526 during this session--vetoed by Governor.

6/22/81

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ASSEMBLY, No. 3601

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED AUGUST 23, 1979

By Assemblymen DOYLE, JACKMAN, PELLECCCHIA, NEWMAN, SCHUCK, T. GALLO, PATERO, COWAN, JANISZEWSKI, CALI, ADUBATO, FORTUNATO, CODEY, LESNIAK, KARCHER, Assemblywoman KALIK, Assemblymen BORNHEIMER, COSTELLO, DEVERIN, BURNS, MARTIN, RAND, FLYNN, Assemblywoman CROCE, Assemblymen HURLEY, D. GALLO, Assemblywoman CURRAN, Assemblyman, KAVANAUGH, Assemblywoman MUHLER, Assemblymen ALBANESE, WEIDEL, SMITH, LITTELL, VILLANE, BAER, Assemblywoman KIERNAN, Assemblymen CONTILLO, BASSANO, HARDWICK, DIFRANCESCO, CHINNICI, BARRY, MAGUIRE, ORECHIO, Assemblywoman BURGIO, Assemblymen KERN, SNEDEKER and SAXTON

(Without Reference)

AN Act concerning electric and gas utilities, supplementing Title 48 of the Revised Statutes, making an appropriation and repealing P. L. 1977, c. 440.

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

1 1. The Board of Public Utilities shall establish a program which
2 shall be known as the "Lifeline Credit Program."

1 2. Any residential electric or gas customer: a. who is currently
2 enrolled in, or applies during the remainder of the 1979 calendar
3 year and is found eligible for, the program of "Pharmaceutical
4 Assistance to the Aged," established pursuant to P. L. 1975, c. 194
5 (C. 30:4D-20 et seq.), as amended and supplemented; or, b. who
6 is currently receiving, or who receives during the remainder of
7 the 1979 calendar year, benefits under the program of Supple-
8 mental Security Income (P. L. 1973, c. 256, C. 44:7-85 et seq.),
9 or c. who is defined as disabled pursuant to the Federal Social
10 Security Act (42 U. S. C. section 416(i)) and satisfies the income
11 eligibility requirements for the Pharmaceutical Assistance to the
12 Aged program, shall be eligible for the "Lifeline Credit Program"
13 established by this act.

14 The Board of Public Utilities shall establish a schedule of eligi-
15 ble customers who meet such qualifications.

1 3. The "Lifeline Credit Program" shall consist of a credit of
2 \$100.00 against the electric or gas utility bill of each eligible resi-
3 dential electric or gas customer at his principal residence. Such
4 credit shall be applied to the electric or gas utility bills of such
5 customer as soon as may be practicable, but in no case later than
6 the bills issued in October, 1979 or as soon thereafter as eligibility
7 is determined, and shall be applied to each subsequent utility bill
8 after the first until the full amount of the credit is exhausted. No
9 household shall receive more than \$100.00 credit. In the event that
10 electric and gas are provided to the same customer by the same
11 utility, a credit of \$100.00 shall be applied to the combined bills
12 from such utility. In the event that electric and gas are provided
13 to the same customer by two separate utilities, a credit of \$50.00
14 shall be applied to the bills from each such utility. Subject to the
15 availability of appropriations, the level of credit shall be increased
16 to \$125.00 beginning in October, 1980.

1 4. Upon certification by the President of the Board of Public
2 Utilities, the State Treasurer shall pay to each electric and gas
3 utility the amount of the credit provided for each eligible residen-
4 tial customer served by such utility. The payments shall be made
5 pursuant to a schedule approved by the President and the Director
6 of the Division of Budget and Accounting and payments made for
7 unused credit shall be returned to the Casino Revenue Fund pur-
8 suant to a plan approved by them.

1 5. a. The Board of Public Utilities is authorized to promulgate,
2 pursuant to law, such rules and regulations as it may deem neces-
3 sary to effectuate the purposes of this act.

4 b. The board shall be entitled to call to its assistance, avail it-
5 self, or contract for the services of any State department, board,
6 bureau, commission, or agency it may deem necessary to implement
7 the provisions of this act.

1 6. Each electric and gas utility shall, by separate notice, inform
2 each eligible residential customer of the "Lifeline Credit Pro-
3 gram." The time of mailing and the content of such notice shall
4 be approved by the Board of Public Utilities.

1 7. The board shall submit a report on the "Lifeline Credit Pro-
2 gram" to the Legislature on March 15, 1980, and annually there-
3 after. Such report shall include, but shall not be limited to, a
4 summary of the implementation of the program, a study of its
5 impact, any recommendations for its revision, and an estimate of
6 the practicability and feasibility of expanding the program to in-

7 clude other needy residential electric and gas utility customers.
 8 The report shall also include an examination of alternative revenue
 9 sources to fund such a program.

1 8. a. There is hereby appropriated to fund the "Lifeline Credit
 2 Program" for fiscal year 1980, the sum of \$44,000,000.00 from the
 3 revenues deposited in the Casino Revenue Fund, as established
 4 in section 145 of P. L. 1977, c. 110 (C. 5:12-145).

5 b. For the purposes of administering the provisions of this act
 6 until June 30, 1980, there is hereby appropriated to the Board of
 7 Public Utilities the sum of \$2,000,000.00 from the revenues de-
 8 posited in the Casino Revenue Fund.

1 9. P. L. 1977, c. 440 (C. 48:2-29.6 et seq.) is repealed.

1 10. This act shall take effect immediately but shall remain in-
 2 operative until the enactment of P. L. 19 . . . , c. . . . , now pending
 3 before the Legislature as Assembly Bill No. 3602.

STATEMENT

This bill would establish a "Lifeline Credit Program" which would provide a \$100.00 line of credit to be used to pay the utility bills of each eligible customer. If sufficient casino revenues are available in fiscal year 1981, the level of credit will increase to \$125.00. All utility customers who are in the PAA Program, or receive benefits from the SSI Program, or are disabled according to the Federal Social Security Act and earn less than \$9,000 a year, if single, or \$12,000 per year, if married, would qualify.

The bill appropriates \$44 million from the Casino Revenue Fund for the program for fiscal year 1980. The utility serving each eligible customer would establish a line of credit for him; the State would pay the utility the amount of the credit.

The "Lifeline Credit Program" will be permanent. Each year, at the beginning of the deliberations of the Appropriations Committee on the annual budget, the Board of Public Utilities will report to the Legislature on the program, and will make recommendations on revising or expanding it.

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

SEPTEMBER 18, 1979

KATHRYN FORSYTH

Governor Brendan Byrne today signed into law A-3601, the "Lifeline" bill, sponsored by Assemblyman John Paul Doyle (D-Ocean).

The bill establishes a "Lifeline Credit Program" which provides a \$100.00 line of credit to be used to help pay utility bills of eligible customers.

The Governor also signed A-3602, sponsored by Assemblyman Christopher J. Jackman (D-Hudson), which temporarily raises the tax on casino revenues from eight percent to twelve percent. The additional revenues will go to the Casino Revenue Fund for aid to senior citizens and handicapped.

All utility customers who are enrolled in the Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged (PAA) program, or receive benefits from the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program, or are disabled according to the federal Social Security Act and earn less than \$9,000 a year if single, or \$12,000 if married, will qualify for the program.

"This is an important day for the elderly and disabled in New Jersey," said Governor Byrne. "In these times of rapidly escalating fuel costs, this legislation will provide vitally needed relief to those New Jerseyans who need it most."

"Regardless of what type of heating is used, this legislation will put an extra \$100.00 in the budgets of eligible senior citizens and the handicapped to pay utility costs."

"This is the latest in a long series of aid programs for senior citizens in our State," Byrne said. "New Jersey provides more assistance to our elderly than virtually any other state."

Byrne signed the legislation at a ceremony at Holiday City, a senior citizen center in Berkeley Township, Ocean County.

A question and answer sheet on the "Lifeline Credit Program" is attached.

#

LIFELINE CREDIT PROGRAM

1. Who is eligible for a Lifeline credit?

To be eligible you must either be enrolled in the Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged (PAA) program, receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or be classified as disabled under Title II of the Social Security Act, receive a Social Security disability check, and have an annual income of less than \$9,000 if single or \$12,000 if married. You must also be the customer of record with the utility company; that is, your name must appear on the utility bill.

2. How do I apply?

If you are enrolled in PAA or receive SSI, you will receive a letter in the mail by October 1. The letter will contain an application card and waiver certification. If you are the customer of record, fill out the forms and mail them in according to the instructions.

3. How do I apply if I am classified as Social Security Disabled (SSD) under Title II?

Application forms will be available by October 1. You may pick them up at local Social Security offices, county welfare agencies, local Medicaid Assistance Units, county Offices on Aging, and local legislative offices. You may also write or call the Board of Public Utilities, P.O. Box 853, Newark, New Jersey 07102 (800) 242-6703 and an application will be sent.

4. What kind of information will the application require?

You will be asked to provide the name(s) of your electric and gas company(ies), your account numbers and your social security numbers. You must also provide a customer receipt portion or photocopy of your utility bill(s).

If you are applying as Social Security Disabled (SSD), you will also be required to provide proof of Social Security Disability such as a copy of your Social Security disability check or your 1979 Social Security Award Certificate.

5. Why do I have to sign a waiver form?

In order to verify that you are eligible for the program, the Board of Public Utilities may have to obtain information from the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services or the Social Security Administration regarding your eligibility for PAA, SSI, or SSD. To do this you must waive the appropriate confidentiality requirement and authorize those agencies to release this information to the Board of Public Utilities.

6. How do I receive the Lifeline credit?

You will not receive a check in the mail. The \$100 Lifeline credit will be credited directly on your utility bill. If you have separate gas and electric companies you will receive a \$50 credit on your electric bill and a \$50 credit on your gas bill.

7. When will I receive that credit?

If you are enrolled in PAA or receive SSI, you should receive your credit by December 1, 1979.

If you are SSD, you should receive your credit or a letter notifying you that you do not meet the eligibility requirements approximately two months after you file your application.

If this does not happen, call the Board of Public Utilities Hotline (800) 242-6703.

8. My wife and I are both enrolled in PAA. Will we get two Lifeline credits?

No. There will be one credit per household. It will be given to the person who is the customer of record with the utility company.

9. My wife is enrolled in PAA; I am not. The utility bill is in my name. Are we eligible for Lifeline?

No. In order to be eligible, your wife would have to be the customer of record with the utility company.

10. If I have questions, who should I call?

Contact the Board of Public Utilities Hotline at (800) 242-6703.

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ASSEMBLY, No. 3526

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED JULY 16, 1979

By Assemblymen JACKMAN, BURSTEIN, PELLECCIA, LITTELL, Assemblywomen KIERNAN, McCONNELL, Assemblymen BROWN, DEVERIN, BASSANO, LESNIAK, HURLEY, D. GALLO, BARRY, KAVANAUGH, WEIDEL, SMITH, HARDWICK, CHINNICI, DiFRANCESCO, MAGUIRE, ORECHIO, Assemblywoman BURGIO, Assemblymen REMINGTON, KERN, GIRGENTI, Assemblywoman MUHLER, Assemblymen DOWD, SNEDEKER, SAXTON, DOYLE, NEWMAN, PATERO, KARCHER, Assemblywoman GARVIN, Assemblymen FORTUNATO, FLYNN, VAN WAGNER, THOMPSON, MAYS, HOLLENBECK, BURNS, CONTILLO, VISOTCKY, Assemblywomen SCANLON, KALIK, Assemblymen SCHWARTZ, MARTIN, OTLOWSKI, ADUBATO, CALI, CODEY, COSTELLO, PASCULLI, T. GALLO, JANISZEWSKI, RAND, SCHUCK, GEWERTZ, GORMAN, STOCKMAN, McMANIMON, MATTHEWS, Assemblywomen TOTARO, CROCE, Assemblymen BATE, BAER, HERMAN, STEWART, COWAN and BORNHEIMER

(Without Reference)

AN ACT concerning electric and gas utilities, supplementing Title 48 of the Revised Statutes, making an appropriation and repealing P. L. 1977, c. 440.

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

1 1. The Board of Public Utilities shall establish a program which
2 shall be known as the "Lifeline Credit Program."

1 2. Any residential electric or gas customer: a. who is currently
2 enrolled in, or applies during the remainder of the 1979 calendar
3 year and is found eligible for, the program of "Pharmaceutical
4 Assistance to the Aged," established pursuant to P. L. 1975,
5 c. 194 (C. 30:4D-20 et seq.), as amended and supplemented; or,
6 b. who is currently receiving, or who receives during the remainder
7 of the 1979 calendar year, benefits under the program of Supple-
8 mental Security Income (P. L. 1973, c. 256, C. 44:7-85 et seq.),

9 shall be eligible for the "Lifeline Credit Program" established
10 by this act.

11 The Board of Public Utilities shall establish a schedule of eligi-
12 ble customers who meet such qualifications.

1 3. The "Lifeline Credit Program" shall consist of a credit of
2 \$100.00 against the electric or gas utility bill of each eligible resi-
3 dential electric or gas customer at his principal residence. Such
4 credit shall be applied to the electric or gas utility bills of such
5 customer as soon as may be practicable, but in no case later than
6 the bills issued in October, 1979 or as soon thereafter as eligibility
7 is determined, and shall be applied to each subsequent utility bill
8 after the first until the full amount of the credit is exhausted. No
9 household shall receive more than \$100.00 credit. In the event that
10 electric and gas are provided to the same customer by the same
11 utility, a credit of \$100.00 shall be applied to the combined bills
12 from such utility. In the event that electric and gas are provided
13 to the same customer by two separate utilities, a credit of \$50.00
14 shall be applied to the bills from each such utility.

1 4. Upon certification by the President of the Board of Public
2 Utilities, the State Treasurer shall pay to each electric and gas
3 utility the amount of the credit provided for each eligible residen-
4 tial customer served by such utility. The payments shall be made
5 pursuant to a schedule approved by the President and the Director
6 of the Division of Budget and Accounting and payments made for
7 unused credit shall be returned to the Casino Revenue Fund pur-
8 suant to a plan approved by them.

1 5. a. The Board of Public Utilities is authorized to promulgate,
2 pursuant to law, such rules and regulations as it may deem neces-
3 sary to effectuate the purposes of this act.

4 b. The board shall be entitled to call to its assistance, avail it-
5 self, or contract for the services of any State department, board,
6 bureau, commission, or agency it may deem necessary to implement
7 the provisions of this act.

1 6. Each electric and gas utility shall, by separate notice, inform
2 each eligible residential customer of the "Lifeline Credit Pro-
3 gram." The time of mailing and the content of such notice shall
4 be approved by the Board of Public Utilities.

1 7. The board shall submit a report on the "Lifeline Credit Pro-
2 gram" to the Legislature on March 15, 1980, and annually there-
3 after. Such report shall include, but shall not be limited to, a
4 summary of the implementation of the program, a study of its
5 impact, any recommendations for its revision, and an estimate of
6 the practicability and feasibility of expanding the program to in-

7 clude other needy residential electric and gas utility customers.
 8 The report shall also include an examination of alternative revenue
 9 sources to fund such a program.

1 8. a. There is hereby appropriated to fund the "Lifeline Credit
 2 Program" for fiscal year 1980, the sum of \$32,000,000.00 from the
 3 revenues deposited in the Casino Revenue Fund, as established
 4 in section 145 of P. L. 1977, c. 110 (C. 5:12-145).

5 b. For the purposes of administering the provisions of this act
 6 until June 30, 1980, there is hereby appropriated to the Board of
 7 Public Utilities the sum of \$1,500,000.00 from the revenues depos-
 8 ited in the Casino Revenue Fund.

1 9. P. L. 1977, c. 440 (C. 48:2-29.6 et seq.) is repealed.

1 10. This act shall take effect immediately but shall remain in-
 2 operative until the enactment of P. L. 19... , c. ... , now pending
 3 before the Legislature as Assembly Bill No. 3318.

STATEMENT

This bill would establish a "Lifeline Credit Program" which would provide a \$100.00 line of credit to be used to pay the utility bills of each eligible customer. All utility customers who are in the PAA Program, or receive benefits from the SSI Program, would qualify.

The bill appropriates \$32 million from the Casino Revenue Fund for the program. The utility serving each eligible customer would establish a line of credit for him; the State would pay the utility the amount of the credit.

The "Lifeline Credit Program" will be permanent. Each year, at the beginning of the deliberations of the Appropriations Committee on the annual budget, the Board of Public Utilities will report to the Legislature on the program, and will make recommendations on revising or expanding it.

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

August 23, 1979

ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 3526

To the General Assembly:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14(b) of the Constitution, I herewith return Assembly Bill No. 3526, with my objections, for reconsideration.

This bill would authorize the Board of Public Utilities to establish a "Lifeline Credit Program" which would provide a \$100.00 line of credit to be used to pay the electric or gas utility bills of each eligible customer.

Eligible customers are defined to include senior citizens who are eligible for Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and persons who are receiving Supplemental Security Income.

I believe that additional Social Security disabled persons, specifically those who satisfy the income eligibility requirements for the Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged program, should also be eligible for the lifeline utility credit program. I have set forth my reasons for expanding this program and for increasing the casino revenue tax which will support this program in the conditional veto message which accompanies my return of Assembly Bill No. 3318 for reconsideration.

In order to satisfy the additional fiscal requirements of an expanded program and to maintain an adequate operational margin, I believe that an additional \$12 million should be appropriated for the "Lifeline Credit Program". I also believe that an additional \$500,000 should be appropriated to cover the administrative costs of determining the eligibility of this expanded group of potentially eligible disabled persons.

Accordingly, I recommend that A-3526 be amended as follows:

Page 1, Section 2, Line 8: Insert "or c. who is defined as disabled pursuant to the federal Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. section 416(i)) and satisfies the income eligibility requirements for the Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged program,"

Page 3, Section 8, Line 2: Delete "\$32,000,000.00", insert "\$44,000,000.00"

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

-2-

Page 3, Section 8, Line 7: Delete "\$1,500,000.00", insert
"2,000,000.00"

Respectfully,

/s/ Brendan Byrne

GOVERNOR

[seal]

Attest:

/s/ Harold L. Hodes

Acting Chief of Staff, Secretary

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FROM THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

JULY 27, 1979

JOE SANTANGELO

Governor Brendan Byrne today said that about 300,000 senior citizen households and disabled persons will benefit from the proposed \$100 Lifeline Utility Credit program that should become effective this Fall.

Byrne said, "This is a major first step in meeting our commitment to people of New Jersey on fixed incomes who have difficulty paying the cost of rising home heating and lighting costs.

"It is by no means the final solution, but rather a pilot program to address the immediate problems of the coming Winter and to give us the experience and understanding necessary to devising a more comprehensive long-range program."

Byrne noted that the previous lifeline legislation had not been funded and was producing no benefits. "The Democratic Administration with a bipartisan legislative effort now sees a program that is feasible, a program that can be funded and a program that will produce benefits for citizens in New Jersey," said Byrne.

"This program will move the lifeline program off the mark and give people on fixed incomes \$100 toward offsetting the increasing cost of all utilities," added the Governor.

"This is not a step backwards, but a step forward. It is a way of assisting those on fixed incomes without a major restructuring of utility rates that would raise rates for other consumers," said Byrne.

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