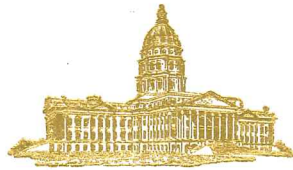


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MEMBER: RULES AND REGULATIONS
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CORRECTIONS AND JUVENILE
JUSTICE OVERSIGHT

March 21, 2023

Senate Committee on Utilities

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB-278

Senator Oletha Faust-Goudeau

Proponent

Good morning, Chairman Olson, Vice-chair Mike Peterson, Ranking Minority Member Senator Marci Francisco and other esteemed members of the committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 278, requiring public utilities to report information regarding customer assistance programs, account delinquencies and disconnections.

Over the years I've had the same constituents who are also the same customers of our utility companies contact me regarding problems paying their gas, lights and water bills. And, I have recommended that they setup payment plans. Although, if they miss one payment regardless of the reason, such as loss of jobs or perhaps the bread winner in the home passed away due to COVID, and now the family faces difficult choices of buying groceries, medicine or paying utility bills. Well, if they miss one payment on that plan, the payment is due in full on demand in sums as large as \$800.00, \$900.00 or \$1200.00, amounts they simply cannot afford.

Many Kansans who are the working poor and qualify for 'LIEP' Low Income Energy Program have been struggling for years to make ends meet and provide for their families, with most of their paychecks going towards high utility bills, will lose that benefit on March 30th. Therefore, they'll be right back in the same situation. However, I believe that we can help them by passing SB 278, by being proactive and identifying these customers and providing them with some relief.

I appreciate your time and attention regarding this matter, and I urge your support.

Thank you,

Senator Oletha Faust-Goudeau

District 29