



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins Leads State Senate Passage of Legislative Package to Lower Utility Costs and Protect Ratepayers

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS January 31, 2025

| ISSUE: **PROTECTING UTILITY RATEPAYERS**



(Albany, NY) – This week, Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins led the New York State Senate in advancing a package of new legislation to protect ratepayers and address New York’s affordability crisis by prioritizing consumers and holding utility companies accountable.

These bills aim to lower costs, improve transparency, and ensure fairness for households across the state. Provisions would, among other things, set up affordable payment plans for eligible utility customers, prevent service shutoffs and late fees while a utility company is being investigated, and require the Public Service Commission (PSC) to study how rate changes could impact customers financially.

“A significant percentage of the calls my office receives from constituents are related to concerns about high energy costs. This is especially true every few years in Westchester, when ConEd asks the PSC for rate increases,” **said Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins.** “This package will require the PSC to take into consideration how any rate change will impact its customers. It will also expand payment options to help those whose bills are increasing past affordability, eliminate estimated billing practices and cap certain charges.”

State Senator Shelley B. Mayer said, “I am pleased that two of my bills passed the Senate this week as part of the Utility Affordability Package. I hear from constituents daily regarding their utility bills, often showing bills that bear little resemblance to their actual usage, or that have the “regulated” part of their bill far exceeding the “market-driven” portion. My bill, S.1896, will prioritize New Yorkers’ right to have stable utility rates that are as low as possible by requiring the PSC to determine rates in a fairer, more transparent manner that puts the interest of ratepayers ahead of the for-profit utility company. My other bill, S.1701, will hold utility companies more accountable when they fail to prepare for and respond to storms. I deeply appreciate everyone who has reached out to me regarding their outrageous ConEd bills and I thank Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and my colleagues for prioritizing the crisis of unaffordable utility rates. In the Senate, we are committed to working to lower utility rates and hold the PSC and Con Ed accountable.”

Highlights of the Legislative Package:

- **Assessing Utility Rate Changes:** Requires the Public Service Commission (PSC) to consider how rate hikes impact consumers' economic well-being.
- **Protecting Customers During Investigations:** Prevents service shut-offs and late fees while the PSC investigates a utility and requires notifications to customers during investigations.
- **Ensuring Accurate Utility Bills:** Mandates utility companies to use actual meter readings, not estimates, to ensure customers are only charged for what they use.
- **Improving Storm Responses:** Strengthens emergency response requirements and allows the PSC to impose stronger penalties for poor utility compliance during storms.
- **Fair Utility Profit Calculations:** Requires standardized equity calculations to ensure fair and reasonable rates.
- **Capping Fixed Charges:** Limits utilities to recovering only necessary fixed costs, such as metering and billing.
- **Affordable Payment Plans:** Directs utilities to create statewide affordable payment plans for low-income customers enrolled in social service programs.
- **Minimum Standards for Payment Plans:** Establishes guidelines for affordable utility payment plans to protect eligible customers.
- **Automatic LIHEAP Re-enrollment:** Requires automatic re-enrollment for low-income households still eligible for energy assistance programs.

###

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 31, 2025. **Contact:** Gregory Totino, (914) 423-4031;
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RELATED LEGISLATION

2025-S1847

- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Requires the public service commission to consider the economic impact of utility rates and charges

January 14, 2025

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by Leroy Comrie

Do you support this bill?

2025-S904

- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Relates to the termination of certain utility services and to reports on investigatory proceedings relating to gas, electric, and steam service

January 06, 2025

In Senate Committee [Rules](#)

Sponsored by [Kristen Gonzalez](#)

Do you support this bill?

2025-S2182

- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Permits the rendering of an estimated bill from a utility corporation or municipality under certain circumstances

January 15, 2025

Passed Assembly

Sponsored by **Michelle Hinchey**

Do you support this bill?

2025-S1701

- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Relates to strengthening of utility storm response and compliance

January 13, 2025

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by Shelley B. Mayer

Do you support this bill?

2025-S1896

-
- Introduced
 - - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
 - - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
 - - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
 - Delivered to Governor
 - Signed By Governor
 -

Requires certain utilities to adopt the common equity ratio and rate of return on equity authorized by the public service commission

January 14, 2025

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by Shelley B. Mayer

Do you support this bill?

2025-S1329

-
- Introduced
 - - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
 - - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
 - - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
 - Delivered to Governor
 - Signed By Governor
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Relates to adjustment of electric residential fixed charges

January 09, 2025

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by [Kevin S. Parker](#)

Do you support this bill?

2025-S1330

- Introduced
 - ◦ In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
 - ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
 - ◦ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
 - Delivered to Governor
 - Signed By Governor
 -

Relates to requiring the establishment of automatic payment plans

January 09, 2025

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by Kevin S. Parker

Do you support this bill?

2025-S1327

- Introduced

- ◦ In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- ◦ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Relates to establishing minimum standards for payment plans for eligible customers

January 09, 2025

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Kevin S. Parker**

Do you support this bill?

2025-S1966

- Introduced

- ◦ In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- ◦ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Requires social services districts to automatically re-enroll eligible persons or households for the low-income home energy assistance program

January 14, 2025

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by Christopher J. Ryan

Do you support this bill?