

To the Senate Committee on Finance,

I am writing to state my support for Senate Bill S2248, the Percentage Income Payment Plan. This bill would create fairer income sensitive utility rates for seniors on fixed income, disabled people and low-income families.

Every month that goes by without PIPP in place, low-income consumers pay disproportionately unaffordable rates. By passing PIPP you can protect community members from unfair utility terminations.

Over the last year inflation has drastically increased in addition to other costs of living expenses in RI. PIPP will help Rhode Islanders with housing security.

This policy already exists in over a dozen other states nationwide. Having PIPP in place will allow for more utility consumers to successfully complete current arrearage forgiveness plans. PIPP will decrease the frequency of people who default in these forgiveness programs, an issue that has been amplified with higher rates of inflation, illness and increased cost of living expenses. This program will also make the transition to fossil free energy more affordable to everyone.

This Bill can reduce state expenditures by lowering the frequency of utility shut-offs. Utility shut-offs are known to cause more emergency room visits, Department of Children, Youth & Families interventions, and other costly outcomes. Through this legislation, we have a chance to challenge the utility termination crisis for low-income households that has plagued our state for too long.

Please pass S2248 and help protect vulnerable Rhode Islanders.

Thank you.

Alex Denisevich
East Greenwich, RI